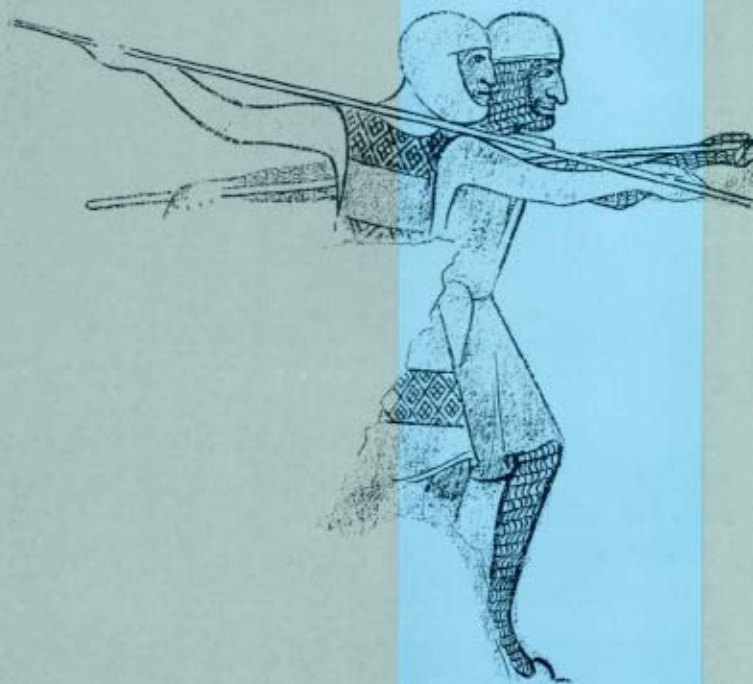




The Household Knights of King John

S. D. Church

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THE HOUSEHOLD KNIGHTS OF KING JOHN

If the medieval king was the helmsman of the ship of state, the royal household was the ship's engine. It comprised men from most ranks of society, from the great magnates of the realm to simple servants who looked after the day-to-day needs of the king and his court. English government, in both peace and war, was conducted through the royal household, amongst whom the most important men were the king's knights: socially élite, militarily preeminent, and indispensable for the workings of English medieval government. It is with these men during the reign of King John that this work is concerned.

S. D. CHURCH is Lecturer in History, University of East Anglia

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THE
HOUSEHOLD KNIGHTS
OF KING JOHN

S. D. CHURCH



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To David and Rosemary Church

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Accounts of Bristol Castle</i>	<i>Accounts of the Constables of Bristol Castle in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries</i> , ed. M. Sharp (Bristol Record Society, 34, 1982)
<i>Ancient Charters</i>	<i>Ancient Charters Royal and Private Prior to AD 1200</i> , i, ed. J. H. Round (Pipe Roll Society, 10, 1888)
<i>Ancient Correspondence Wales</i>	<i>Calendar of Ancient Correspondence Concerning Wales</i> , ed. J. G. Edwards (Cardiff, 1935)
<i>Ancient Deeds</i>	<i>A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds in the Public Record Office</i> , 6 vols. (London, 1890–1915)
ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i> (the first four volumes were published as <i>Proceedings of the Battle Conference</i>), ed. R. Allen Brown (1979–89), M. Chibnall (1990–4), C. Harper-Bill (1995–)
<i>Barts. Hospital Cart.</i>	<i>Cartulary of St Bartholomew's Hospital Founded 1123: a Calendar</i> , ed. N. J. M. Kerling (London, 1973)
<i>Berkeley Castle Charters</i>	<i>Descriptive Catalogue of the Charters and Muniments in the Possession of the Rt. Hon. Lord Fitzharding at Berkeley Castle</i> , ed. I. H. Jeayes (Bristol, 1892)
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
<i>Book of Fees</i>	<i>Liber Feodorum. The Book of Fees Commonly Called Testa de Neville</i> , 3 vols. (London, 1920–31)
<i>Bristol Charters</i>	<i>Bristol Charters, 1155–1373</i> , ed. N. Dermott

Abbreviations

	Harding (Bristol Record Society, 1, 1930)
<i>Cal. Lib. Rolls</i>	<i>Calendar of the Liberate Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1226-1240</i> (London, 1916)
<i>Carew MSS</i>	<i>Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, 6 vols.</i> , ed. J. S. Brewer and W. Bullen (London, 1867-73)
<i>Carpenter, Minority</i>	D. A. Carpenter, <i>The Minority of Henry III</i> (London, 1990)
<i>Cartae Antiquae Rolls</i>	<i>Cartae Antiquae Rolls 1-10</i> , ed. L. Landon (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 17, 1939)
<i>Chancellor's Roll 8 Richard I</i>	<i>The Chancellor's Roll for the Eighth Year of the Reign of King Richard the First: Michaelmas 1196</i> , ed. D. M. Stenton (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 45, 1930)
<i>Chartae, Privilegia et Immunitates</i>	<i>Chartae, Privilegia et Immunitates: Being Transcripts of Charters and Privileges to Cities, Towns, Abbeys, and Other Bodies Corporate, 1171-1395</i> (Irish Record Commission, 1829-30, 1889)
<i>Chron. Maj.</i>	<i>Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora</i> , 7 vols., ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series (London, 1872-83)
<i>Cirencester Abbey Cart.</i>	<i>Cartulary of Cirencester Abbey, Gloucestershire</i> , 3 vols., i-ii, ed. C. D. Ross (London, 1964), iii, ed. M. Devine (Oxford, 1977)
<i>Close Rolls 1227-31</i>	<i>Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1227-31</i> (London, 1902)
<i>Cockersand Chart.</i>	<i>The Chartulary of Cockersand Abbey of the Premonstratensian Order</i> , 6 vols., ed. W. Farrer (Chetham Society, new series, 38-40, 43, 46-7, 1898, 1900, 1905)
<i>Coggeshall</i>	<i>Radulfi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum</i> , ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series (London, 1875)
<i>Copinger, County of Suffolk</i>	W. A. Copinger, ed., <i>County of Suffolk . . . Its History as Disclosed by Existing Records and Other Documents, being</i>

Abbreviations

	<i>Materials for . . . the History of Suffolk</i> (London, 1904)
Coventry	<i>Memoriale Fratris Walteri Coventria</i> , 2 vols., ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series (London, 1872–3)
Curia Regis Rolls	<i>Curia Regis Rolls of the Reigns of Richard I, John and Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office</i> , 18 vols. (London, 1922–)
Deputy Keeper Ireland 23rd Report	<i>Appendix to the 23rd Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records in Ireland</i> , (London, 1891)
Dialogus de Scaccario	<i>De Necessariis Observantiis Scaccarii Dialogus qui vulgo dictur Dialogus de Scaccario</i> , ed. C. Johnson (London, 1950)
Diplomatic Documents	<i>Diplomatic Documents Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1101–1272</i> , i, ed. P. Chaplais (London, 1964)
Docs. of English History	<i>Documents Illustrative of English History in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries</i> , ed. H. Cole, Record Commission (London, 1844)
Dugdale, Baronage	W. Dugdale, <i>The Baronage of England</i> , 2 vols. (1675–6)
Early Lancs. Charters	<i>The Lancashire Pipe Rolls of 31 Henry I . . . and of the Reigns of Henry II . . . Richard I . . . and King John . . . and Early Lancashire Charters of the Period from the Reign of William Rufus to that of King John</i> , ed. W. Farrer (Liverpool, 1902)
Early Yorks. Charters	<i>Early Yorkshire Charters</i> , 10 vols., i–iii, ed. W. Farrer (Edinburgh, 1914–16), iv–x, ed. C. T. Clay (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, extra series, 1935–55)
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
Ex. Rot. Fin.	<i>Excerpta e Rotulis Finium in Turri Londinensi Asservatis, AD 1216–72</i> , 2 vols., ed. C. Roberts, Record Commission (London, 1835–6)
Farrer, Honors and Knights' Fees	W. Farrer, <i>Honors and Knights' Fees: An Attempt to Identify the Component Parts of Certain Honours and to Trace the Descent of</i>

Abbreviations

	<i>the Tenants of the Same Who Held by Knight's Service or Sergeanty from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century</i> , 3 vols. (London, 1923-5)
<i>Feet of Fines Essex</i>	<i>Feet of Fines for Essex</i> , 3 vols., ed. R. E. G. Kirk and E. F. Kirk (Essex Archaeological Society, 1899-1949)
<i>Feet of Fines Norfolk and Suffolk</i>	<i>Feet of Fines for the County of Norfolk for the Reign of King John, 1201-1215; for the County of Suffolk for the Reign of King John, 1199-1214</i> , ed. B. Dodwell (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 32, 1958)
<i>Foedera</i> , i, 1,	<i>Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et cuiuscunque generis Acta Publica</i> , ed. T. Rymer, new edn, vol. i, part 1, ed. A. Clark and F. Holbrooke, Record Commission (London, 1816)
<i>Gormanston Reg.</i>	<i>Calendar of the Gormanston Register c.1175-1397: from the Original in the Possession of the Rt. Hon. the Viscount of Gormanston</i> , ed. J. Mill and M. J. McEnery (Extra Volume of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Dublin, 1916)
<i>HMC Middleton</i>	<i>Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton Preserved at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire</i> (Hereford, 1911)
<i>Holt, Northerners</i>	J. C. Holt, <i>The Northerners: a Study in the Reign of King John</i> (Oxford, 1961)
<i>Interdict Documents</i>	<i>Interdict Documents</i> , ed. P. M. Barnes and W. R. Powell (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 34, 1960)
'Irish pipe roll'	'The Irish pipe roll of 14 John, 1211-12', ed. O. Davies and D. B. Quinn, <i>Ulster Journal of Archaeology</i> , 4 (supplement, July 1941)
<i>Jolliffe, Angevin Kingship</i>	J. E. A. Jolliffe, <i>Angevin Kingship</i> (London, 2nd edn, 1963)
<i>Landon, Itinerary of King Richard I</i>	L. Landon, <i>Itinerary of King Richard I</i> (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 13, 1935)
<i>Lincs. Assize Rolls</i>	<i>The Earliest Lincolnshire Assize Rolls, 1202-1209</i> , ed. D. M. Stenton (Lincoln Record Society, 22, 1926)

Abbreviations

<i>List of Sheriffs</i>	<i>List of Sheriffs for England and Wales</i> (Public Record Office, Lists and Indexes 9, New York, 1963)
<i>Mag. Rot. Norm.</i>	<i>Magna Rotuli Scaccarii Normaniae sub Regibus Angliae</i> , 2 vols., ed. T. Stapleton (Society of Antiquaries of London, 1840-4)
<i>Maréchal</i>	<i>Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal</i> , 3 vols., ed. P. Meyer (Société de l'histoire de France, Paris, 1891-1901)
<i>Memo. Roll 1 John</i>	<i>The Memoranda Roll for the Michaelmas Term of the First Year of the Reign of King John, 1199-1200</i> , ed. H. G. Richardson (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 21, 1943)
<i>Memo. Roll 10 John</i>	<i>The Memoranda Roll for the Tenth Year of King John (1207-8) . . .</i> , ed. R. Allen Brown (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 31, 1955)
<i>Mitchell, Studies in Taxation</i>	S. K. Mitchell, <i>Studies in Taxation under John and Henry III</i> (New Haven, CT, 1914)
<i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i>	W. Dugdale, <i>Monasticon Anglicanum</i> , 6 vols., ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis, and B. Bandinel, Record Commission (London, 1846)
<i>Normandie</i>	<i>Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre</i> , ed. F. Michel (Société de l'histoire de France, Paris, 1840)
<i>Ormond Deeds</i>	<i>Calendar of Ormond Deeds, 1172-1350</i> , ed. E. Curtis (Dublin, 1932)
<i>Painter, King John</i>	S. Painter, <i>The Reign of King John</i> (Baltimore, MD, 1949)
<i>Patent Rolls 1216-25</i>	<i>Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1216-25</i> (London, 1901)
<i>Patent Rolls 1225-32</i>	<i>Patent Rolls of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1225-32</i> (London, 1903)
<i>Pipe Rolls</i>	<i>Pipe Rolls</i> : citations to Pipe Rolls are to the regnal years of the reigning kings and published by the Pipe Roll Society, London

Abbreviations

<i>Placitorum</i>	<i>Placitorum in Domo Capitulari Westmonasteriensi Asservatorum Abbreviatio Temporibus Regum Ric. I. Johann. Henr. III. Edw. I. Edw. II.</i> , ed. G. Rose and W. Illingworth, Record Commission (London, 1811)
Powicke, <i>Loss of Normandy</i>	F. M. Powicke, <i>The Loss of Normandy, 1189–1204</i> (Manchester, 2nd edn, 1961)
Preen, 'The <i>acta</i> of Count John'	M. Preen, 'The <i>acta</i> of John, lord of Ireland and count of Mortain, with a study of his household', (MA thesis, University of Manchester, 1949)
<i>Reading Carts.</i>	<i>Reading Abbey Cartularies: British Library Manuscripts Egerton 3031, Harley 1708 and Cotton Vespasian E xxv</i> , 2 vols., ed. B. R. Kemp (Camden Society, 4th series, 31, 33, 1986, 1987)
<i>Red Book</i>	<i>Red Book of the Exchequer</i> , 3 vols., ed. H. Hall, Record Commission (London, 1896)
<i>Register of St Thomas</i>	<i>Register of St Thomas, Dublin</i> , ed. J. T. Gilbert, Rolls Series (London, 1889)
<i>Rot. Chart.</i>	<i>Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati</i> , ed. T. Duffus Hardy, Record Commission (London, 1837)
<i>Rot. Curia Regis</i>	<i>Rotuli Curiae Regis: Rolls and Records of the Court held before the King's Justiciars or Justices</i> , 2 vols., ed. F. Palgrave, Record Commission (London, 1835)
<i>Rot. Fin.</i>	<i>Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus in Turri Londinensi Asservati</i> , ed. T. Duffus Hardy, Record Commission (London, 1835)
<i>Rot. Lib. John</i>	<i>Rotuli de Liberatis ac de Misis et Praestitis Regnante Johanne</i> , ed. T. Duffus Hardy, Record Commission (London, 1844)
<i>Rot. Litt. Claus.</i>	<i>Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati</i> , 2 vols., ed. T. Duffus Hardy, Record Commission (London, 1833, 1844)
<i>Rot. Litt. Pat.</i>	<i>Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi Asservati</i> , ed. T. Duffus Hardy, Record Commission (London, 1835)

Abbreviations

<i>Rot. Norm.</i>	<i>Rotuli Normanniae in Turri Londinensi Asservati</i> , ed. T. Duffus Hardy, Record Commission (London, 1835)
<i>St Mary's Cartularies, Dublin</i>	<i>The Cartularies of St Mary's Abbey, Dublin: With the Register of its House at Dunbrody, and Annals of Ireland</i> , 2 vols., ed. J. T. Gilbert, Rolls Series (London, 1884)
<i>Sanders, English Baronies</i>	I. J. Sanders, <i>English Baronies: a Study of their Origin and Descent, 1086–1327</i> (Oxford, 1960)
<i>Shirley, Royal and other Historical Letters</i>	<i>Royal and other Historical Letters Illustrative of the Reign of Henry III</i> , 2 vols., ed. W. W. Shirley, Rolls Series (London, 1862, 1866)
<i>Tout, Chapters</i>	T. F. Tout, <i>Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: the Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals</i> , 6 vols. (Manchester, 1920–33)
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria History of the Counties of England</i> , ed. H. A. Doubleday, W. Page, L. Salzman, R. B. Pugh, and C. R. Elrington (Oxford, 1900–)
<i>Warren, King John</i>	W. L. Warren, <i>King John</i> (London, 1961)

INTRODUCTION

In 1901, J. E. Morris first drew attention to the importance of the royal military household in the armies of Edward I. In his work on Edward's campaigns in Wales, Morris described the king's military household as 'a small standing army' which 'must have been invaluable as a nucleus of resistance against the Welsh while others were being raised'.¹ The knights of Edward's *familia* were singled out for particular attention by Morris. They performed the functions of a 'headquarters staff' and were given all manner of other duties. They garrisoned the king's castles and governed those parts of Wales which Edward had conquered. During times of war, Morris argued, King Edward's household knights were in charge of recruitment, transport, and escort duty in addition to their martial function as the nucleus of the king's army. While Morris did not extend his discussion to the problem of the functions of household knights in peacetime, he did describe the importance of the military household in times of crisis. In 1920, T. F. Tout brought out the second volume of his *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England* in which he built upon the conclusions arrived at by Morris. He suggested that Edward's army 'was essentially the household in arms'.² In effect he was saying that the king's military household was not just the nucleus of the army, but actually was the army. The king's household consisted of a small number of mounted warriors, he argued, made up of bannerets, knights, squires, and sergeants-at-arms. According to Tout, this core could be expanded rapidly at very short notice when circumstances required.³

If the military household was the royal army, then it followed that it was the household itself which made the preparations for, and organised the conduct of, the campaign. It was the king's stewards and the king's

¹ J. E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), p. 84.

² Tout, *Chapters*, ii, p. 133.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 138; M. C. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance under Edward I* (London, 1972), ch. 2.

The Household Knights of King John

marshals who were responsible for the administration and discipline of the army, and the clerks of the wardrobe who were responsible for meeting the cost of its supplies and wages.⁴ The successful completion of the king's campaign, therefore, depended almost entirely on the efficiency of the whole household during times of conflict. The extent to which the king's military household formed the very foundation of the army's cavalry force was graphically illustrated by N. B. Lewis in 1948. Lewis examined the wardrobe accounts between August and November 1297 for the campaign in Flanders and discovered that the household element in the cavalry force amounted to some 550 'troopers' at its peak, and that this number represented about two-thirds of the mounted contingent on that campaign.⁵ By this time, then, it was abundantly clear that the military household of Edward I was, to all intents and purposes, the royal army, and that the household as a whole played the central role in the conduct of Edward's campaigns.

Since the 1960s, historians have moved the origins of the royal military household back in time. In 1963, J. O. Prestwich suggested that the Anglo-Norman kings used the military element in their households in much the same way as did the Edwardian kings. He further posited that this continuity in the household could be pushed back at least to the Anglo-Saxon period, if not even further to the *comitatus* described by Tacitus in his *Germania*.⁶ Where Prestwich led, others followed, and in 1977 Marjorie Chibnall pointed to the significance of Henry I's military household to the maintenance of his control over Normandy.⁷ In 1981, Prestwich again joined the debate, stressing the importance of the military household in both the martial and non-martial spheres.⁸ He suggested that there was enough evidence to show that the household was vitally important to the 'political, administrative and military history of the Norman reigns'.⁹ Through their attention to the military household, historians have increasingly come to appreciate that the royal household knights played a dominant role in this organisation. C. L. Kingsford's fascinating biography of Otho de Grandison, published in

⁴ Tout, *Chapters*, ii, pp. 137, 139–40.

⁵ N. B. Lewis, 'The English forces in Flanders, August–November 1297', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F. M. Powicke*, ed. R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin, and R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), p. 314.

⁶ J. O. Prestwich, 'Anglo-Norman feudalism and the problem of continuity', *Past and Present*, 26 (1963), pp. 50–2.

⁷ M. Chibnall, 'Mercenaries and the *familia regis* under Henry I', *History*, 62 (1977), pp. 15–32. See also R. Allen Brown, 'The status of the Norman knight', in his *Castles, Conquest and Charters: Collected Papers* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 290–304; and his *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 2nd edn, 1985), pp. 198–200.

⁸ J. O. Prestwich, 'The military household of the Norman kings', *EHR*, 96 (1981), pp. 1–35.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25–6.

1909, clearly illustrated that at least one of Edward I's household knights was one of the king's most trusted counsellors.¹⁰ Although he chose not to explore in detail the non-martial functions of the household knights, Tout also recognised that Edward's household knights performed a central role in the maintenance of the king's rule. 'The knightly element in the king's household', he said, 'was not there to fight, but to administer, though being knights by habit and training and in this case also by profession, it could always use swords if the need arose.'¹¹

The importance of the household knight in the administration of Edward's regnum was further illustrated by J. G. Edwards in 1948. The treason of Thomas Turberville in 1295 was a *cause célèbre* which attracted the attentions of most commentators of its day.¹² What drew their interest was not that Turberville had committed treason, but that he was 'miles de familia regis and domesticus et praecipue domini regis Angliae familiaris'.¹³ Because he was a man who had been privy to the king's innermost thoughts, his act of treason was unforgivable. In the minds of contemporaries Turberville's position as *miles de familia regis* clearly suggested that he had detailed knowledge of the king's activities. It was his position as a household knight which allowed him into the king's confidence. And, because he was in the king's confidence, Turberville was entrusted with numerous important missions by Edward I. Turberville was obviously no brainless hired thug whose sole function was to bash heads for the king.

This distinctive position which the household knights of Edward I enjoyed can also be perceived in the reign of King John. In 1955, J. E. A. Jolliffe revealed that the Angevin kings relied extensively on their household for the governance of the realm. In this work, however, Jolliffe despaired of identifying any more than a handful of the household knights, even for the period of John's reign when the documentary evidence becomes so much more abundant.¹⁴ Jolliffe argued, moreover, that of those knights who could be identified, there was no real reason to believe that they had a tangible position and that they possessed no formal 'badge proclaiming [their] status'.¹⁵ But Jolliffe was mistaken to be so pessimistic about identifying John's household knights.

There is little doubt that the king's knights do in John's reign appear

¹⁰ C. L. Kingsford, 'Sir Otho de Grandison (1238?-1328)', *TRHS*, 3rd series, 3 (1909), pp. 125-95.

¹¹ Tout, *Chapters*, ii, p. 135.

¹² J. G. Edwards, 'The treason of Thomas Turberville, 1295', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F. M. Powicke*, ed. R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin, and R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), p. 296.

¹³ J. O. Prestwich, 'Military household', p. 4.

¹⁴ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 218-19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

as a cohesive and identifiable body in some of the contemporary documentation. The majority of the knights who form the core of this study have been identified from three surviving lists of John's household knights. The first list dates from the campaign in Scotland in the summer of 1209. The surviving mise roll for this campaign lists some thirty-six knights of the king's household who received *dona* on 1, 3, and 12 August. In the manuscript all these men were highlighted for special attention by the scribe, and headed by the rubric '*donum factum militibus de familia Regis in exercitu Scochia*'.¹⁶ The second list dates from the following year and the campaign waged in Ireland by John. The prestita roll for this campaign mentions sixteen household knights who received prests on 11 August. All these men received their imprests under the heading '*prestitum factum familie domini Regis*'.¹⁷ The final list of household knights which survives from John's reign occurs in a muster roll for late 1215 and relates to John's northern campaign against the rebels. In this roll the forty-seven household knights who accompanied the king were separated from the other knights under the heading '*nomina militum qui sunt de hospitio Domini Regis*'.¹⁸ These three lists all appear within larger documents and the royal knights are quite clearly distinguished from the rest by the scribes. They therefore go a long way to illustrate that the scribes who drew them up were well aware that the *milites de familia regis* were indeed a discrete group worthy of separate mention in the documentation.

Similar evidence from the early years of the reign of Henry III confirms the impression that royal household knights were seen by contemporaries as a group worthy of special distinction. Dating from between 1225 and 1229, there are three lists of household knights who were summoned by Henry III for three separate campaigns.¹⁹ In 1225-6, 123 men were listed as '*milites summoniti de familia domini Regis*'.²⁰ In 1228, 70 men were listed as '*milites de familia Regis vocati per breve*'.²¹ And in 1229, 67 men were listed as '*isti milites sunt summonendi de familia Regis*'.²² The household knights received separate summonses from the ordinary tenants-in-chief and it is clear that the separate summons was in part due to a specific obligation that they owed to the king.²³

¹⁶ PRO, E101/349/1B m. 2. ¹⁷ Rot. Lib. John, p. 212.

¹⁸ S. D. Church, 'The earliest English muster roll, 18/19 December 1215', *Historical Research*, 67 (1994), pp. 1-17.

¹⁹ For the dating of these lists see J. S. Critchley, 'Summonses to military service early in the reign of Henry III', *EHR*, 85 (1971), p. 86.

²⁰ PRO, C72/2 m. 20.

²¹ PRO, C72/2 m. 15 d. ²² PRO, C72/2 m. 13.

²³ Critchley, 'Summonses', pp. 79-95.

The special position which household knights held within the household is seen in other records of the period. In 1205, for example, when the army was gathered on the south coast awaiting the order to embark for Poitou, John's barons refused to pass judgement on William Marshal after the Marshal had revealed the extent of his oath to Philip Augustus. John, in frustration, turned to his bachelors in the hope that they would return the desired verdict against the Marshal.²⁴ This incident once more demonstrates that the household knights were looked upon as a distinctive group, separate from the others in the royal household.²⁵ There are further examples of the importance which contemporaries attached to the position of royal household knight. In 1210, John attempted to justify his actions towards William de Breosa. The king expressly stated that the role of one of his household knights, Robert of Burgate, was important in the affair. Robert was 'unum militem de domo nostra', and had been used by the king to oversee the attempts of William, earl of Derby, to reconcile John to William de Breosa.²⁶ In 1215, when John wished to impress upon the Pope that his intention to pay Richard's widow, Berengaria, her dower was sincere, he stated that 'fecimus juarare in animam Gaufridum Luterell militem nostrum'.²⁷ Again in 1220 an envoy to the papal curia was identified by the clerks of Henry III for their king as 'militem nobis familiarem'.²⁸

This general recognition of the household knights as a separate and important group can also be illustrated in the local county environment. In an incident where two of John's household knights were in danger of losing a court case against a certain Baldwin Tyrell whom they had accused of spreading rumours that the king had been killed in North Wales, they proclaimed that 'illi fuerunt de privata familia domini regis, jurati quod, si illi aliquid audirent quod fuisset contra dominum regem, domino regi illud intimarent'.²⁹ Jolliffe thought that this was something like 'a counsellor's oath . . . for the members of the Household',³⁰ presumably looking forward to the counsellors' oath of the fourteenth century.³¹ Although the oath to which this case refers seems to have

²⁴ *Maréchal*, lines 13, 188–90.

²⁵ J. M. W. Bean, '“Bachelor” and retainer', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 3 (1972), pp. 117–32, has shown how, by the beginning of the thirteenth century, the term bachelor had come to mean a household retainer.

²⁶ *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 107.

²⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 181 b, 182 (2); *Rot. Chart.*, p. 219 b; *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 137.

²⁸ *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, pp. 257, 268 (2).

²⁹ *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, p. 170.

³⁰ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, p. 176 and no. 2.

³¹ *Reports from the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the State of the Public Records of the Kingdom* (London, 1800), pp. 235–6.

been particular, reflecting the circumstances of the reign at this time, it seems highly likely that it indicates that John's household knights were accustomed to take oaths to the king, making them a distinctive body with a special relationship to their lord. The similarities between the relationship that these men and their lord shared with the *comitatus* of Tacitus' *Germania* is striking.

As Tout pointed out, the king's knights were warriors by 'habit and training';³² although many of them were used as administrators, they had all started life as fighting men. In the middle ages fighting was a team game and each household made a natural team; the royal household was no exception. The charge in close formation and the feigned flight required both precision and a great deal of training, and that training had to take place within each group of knights. Marjorie Chibnall has shown just how effective the king's *milites de familia* were when operating as a coherent group in the defence of Henry I's Norman lands.³³ The early career of William Marshal gives us a vivid picture of the life of a household knight: engaging in an endless round of tournaments in which the most successful knights were those who worked in cooperation with their fellow knights. These contests usually involved two or more teams who fought each other in imitation of battlefield conditions scarcely less dangerous than the real thing.³⁴ The tournament was the ideal training ground for warfare and men like William de Tancarville, the Marshal's first lord, were keen that the knights of their households gained the experience on offer at these meetings. David Crouch has commented upon the role of William Marshal himself as 'player manager' of the young king's knightly household.³⁵ Undoubtedly this constant round of fighting together produced a camaraderie which strengthened feelings of mutual trust and support. This feeling amongst fighting men is common to all ages and the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were no different. Crouch has described how the Marshal's knights 'gave him much of his political weight in society, and their attendance at his side gave him dignity'.³⁶ This was certainly how the household knights perceived themselves; they were separate from the rest of the household in a way that only

³² Tout, *Chapters*, ii, p. 135.

³³ Chibnall, 'Mercenaries and the *familia regis* under Henry I', pp. 16, 19.

³⁴ D. Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire, 1147-1219* (London, 1990), pp. 37-52, 174-8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 176; G. Duby, *William Marshal: the Flower of Chivalry*, trans. R. Howard (London, 1986), p. 84.

³⁶ Crouch, *William Marshal*, p. 136.

fighting men can be, and they thought little of the household clerks, seeing them as worthy only of ridicule.³⁷

Despite the general appreciation of the importance of royal household knights, there is as yet no full-length study of these men; as a result, important questions remain unanswered. For example, little is known about how these men were recruited, how they were rewarded for their services, and how they were used by the king. As regards to their functions, many historians have been far too quick to assume that royal household knights did little other than tasks related to fighting. As recently as 1987, for example, Chris Given-Wilson stated that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries 'the overriding duty [of the household knights] to the king was military'.³⁸ The temptation to overstate the martial function of the household knight is understandable. As Allen Brown has pointed out, 'the role of the king as war leader . . . before and after the feudal period as well as during it, is a fundamental in history'.³⁹ Medieval kings regularly engaged in warfare; as a result, the historian is able to perceive the household knight at war more easily than at any other time. There are other reasons, too, why so much emphasis has been placed on the military activities of the knights of the king's household. In times of war it is more easy to witness the household knights acting as a coherent group. Warfare is exciting and therefore captures the attentions of the chroniclers and, as a result, the attentions of modern historians as well. But, I shall argue, it is possible to obtain a valid picture of the everyday functions of the king's household knights only by concentrating on the material produced by government in the course of its everyday activities. The military functions of the household knights were just one aspect of their lives, and it is important to see the martial role of the king's knights in the context of their general role as members of the king's *familia*, a word that implies a closeness which is lost in our modern translation of the word as household.

The reign of King John provides the historian with the earliest opportunity to see the royal household knights in detail. During John's rule, for the first time, the public authorities took great care to record the minutiae of governmental administration. Under the auspices of Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, the chancery began to record the various letters sent by the king to his officials in the realm.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 135.

³⁸ C. Given-Wilson, 'The king and the gentry in fourteenth-century England', *TRHS*, 5th series, 57 (1987), p. 88.

³⁹ R. Allen Brown, 'Status of the Norman knight', p. 297.

The Household Knights of King John

The king's household also began to record its expenditure on items such as payments to the king's household knights. Unfortunately, these household accounts and chancery rolls do not survive in continuous sequence, but enough have remained intact to constitute a significant source. This increasing detail of governmental records lifts the household knights from their previous position of relative obscurity to a point where their status and importance may be perceived by the historian. This work, however, sits very much at a transitional point in the quantity and quality of the evidence. Whilst it is possible to perceive the household knights in some detail, it is not until later in the thirteenth century that the rest of the military household can be seen with any clarity. The squires, sergeants-at-arms, crossbowmen, and run-of-the-mill infantry remain obscured in John's reign; it is only occasionally that we can glimpse the totality of the royal military household. Nevertheless, it has been possible to obtain a remarkable amount of material on the activities of the household knights themselves, and, as a result, perceive something of the importance of the royal household to the control of John's realm.

The structure of the military household during the reign of Edward I has already received considerable attention from a number of scholars. Edward's military household was simple in its make-up. The steward was the head of the whole household and was responsible for administering justice to clerks and laymen alike; as an integral part of his duties, the steward had the responsibility of administering the 'household army'. Below the steward came the marshal, who kept the muster rolls and who was responsible for the discipline of the military household. There were usually two stewards and two marshals at a time, a system which allowed at least one responsible officer to be *in situ* at all times.⁴⁰ Both the stewards and the marshals were always knights or bannerets, and, as such, had usually been promoted to their positions from the ranks of the household knights.⁴¹ Below the stewards and marshals were the royal household knights, and below the knights came the squires, mounted sergeants, crossbowmen, and foot soldiers.

The role of the Angevin steward has been discussed in detail by Jolliffe.⁴² He maintained that by the time of John's reign the steward had taken most of the functions of the household under his control,

⁴⁰ Tout, *Chapters*, ii, pp. 28, 33.

⁴¹ T. F. Tout, *The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History*, revised by H. Johnstone (Manchester, 2nd edn, 1936), pp. 244–81.

⁴² Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 210–25.

both domestic and military,⁴³ as early as 1163 the steward had taken the leadership of the household knights from the constable.⁴⁴ But Jolliffe was forced to conclude that there was little to connect the steward to the leadership of the king's household forces in times of war.⁴⁵ But they did have an important part to play in campaigning activity, as we shall see shortly. As in the reign of Edward I,⁴⁶ there were always at least two, and sometimes as many as four, stewards holding office concurrently in the Angevin royal household.⁴⁷ There are no lists which describe who the stewards were but we do know the identities of the men who held this office during John's reign. Tout identified Robert of Thornham (1199–1201), Peter of Stokes (1201–5), William de Cantilupe (1199–1216),⁴⁸ Brian de Lisle (1213–16), and Falkes de Bréauté (1215–16).⁴⁹ To this list we must append the name of William of Harcourt, who became a household steward in or before 1210 and remained in office until the end of the reign.⁵⁰

The men who became stewards of the royal household undoubtedly had extensive military expertise. Falkes de Bréauté, for example, was very obviously a man of considerable martial abilities, and it can be no accident that he was appointed as a household steward early in 1215 when John had need of such qualities in the men he employed. But by and large, the stewards of John's household concentrated their efforts on the logistics on the king's campaigning activities. The actual leadership of the household forces in war they left to other men. Brian de Lisle, for example, had served John as a household knight from at least 1204, and had proved to be an extremely useful servant.⁵¹ In 1205, he became one of the custodians of William de Stuteville's lands; when these were redeemed, Brian retained control of the vital northern strongholds of

⁴³ Ibid., p. 225.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 211, 212. ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 218.

⁴⁶ Tout, *Chapters*, ii, pp. 28, 158.

⁴⁷ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 216–17.

⁴⁸ William was referred to as a household steward as early as 10 October 1200 (*Rot. Lib. John*, p. 1) and he was described as a steward of John's when John was count of Mortain in a charter to Robert de Berners given at L'Isle d'Andely on 12 July 1198 (*Ancient Deeds*, iv, A. 6686). It seems likely, therefore, that he was steward to John from the beginning of his reign and was one of those whom John took with him from his household as count to that as king.

⁴⁹ Tout, *Chapters*, vi, p. 38.

⁵⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 207, 212; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 28. There have been a number of other men suggested as stewards of John's household, none of which, alas, I have been able to verify. Jolliffe, in his *Angevin Kingship*, p. 220, suggested that Geoffrey de Neville, although mostly employed by John as a chamberlain in the household, was a steward for a short time between 1207 and 1208. R. C. Stacey, in his *Politics, Policy and Finance under Henry III, 1216–1245* (Oxford, 1987), p. 102, no. 50, suggested that Osbert Giffard was also a royal steward under John. N. R. Holt, in his edition of *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1210–1211* (Manchester, 1964), pp. 65, 68 (2), 155, indexed John fitz Hugh as 'senescallus Regis'.

⁵¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 13 b, 17 b.

Knaresborough and Boroughbridge.⁵² He was chief forester under Hugh de Neville in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire from 1207;⁵³ from 1208 he was castellan of Bolsover as well as enjoying a variety of custodies for the king.⁵⁴ Brian's appointment to the royal stewardship coincided with the preparations the king was making for his invasion of the continent, and it was Brian's administrative qualities that King John was after.⁵⁵ In November 1213, Brian, along with Falkes de Bréauté, took 3,000 marks across the channel 'for the defence of Flanders'.⁵⁶ Brian was back in England by Christmas, when he was to be found involved in the transportation of money to the king.⁵⁷ Brian was also involved as a paymaster to the victorious men who had destroyed the French fleet at Damme, and even seems to have had his own galley, perhaps captured booty from Flanders.⁵⁸ In April 1214, Brian sent 30,000 quarrels to Portsmouth for transportation to the continent for the campaign which was already in progress.⁵⁹ Brian was the only one of the three royal stewards to accompany John to Poitou in 1214 (he was with the king at Niort by 6 May 1214);⁶⁰ although the details of the campaign are obscure, the witness lists of the charter rolls suggest that he had an important role to play as one of John's advisers.⁶¹

In extraordinary circumstances, the royal stewards could act as field commanders for the king; the situation at the end of John's reign provided just those circumstances. As the king's steward, Falkes de Bréauté was responsible for making preparations for the impending civil war when he was placed in charge of the payment and distribution of the stipendiaries whom John had brought back from Poitou.⁶² Falkes was one of the men who were left in the south of England in early 1216 to keep the rebel barons cooped up in London while John took his forces northwards.⁶³ It is clear that Falkes played a major part in leading the king's stipendiary forces throughout the civil war.⁶⁴ During the

⁵² *Pipe Roll 7 John*, pp. 38–40; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 309; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 43, 42 b, 57 b, 65 b (2), 66, 66 b, 83 b, 90, 105 b, 144; *Pipe Rolls 8 John*, pp. 217–20; *9 John*, pp. 125–7; *10 John*, pp. 50–1; *12 John*, p. 135.

⁵³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 72 b, 73.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80 b.

⁵⁵ The first time that Brian was described as a royal steward was as a witness to a letter close dating to 3 October 1213 authorising the acquisition of victuals for the king's table (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 154).

⁵⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 139 b (4).

⁵⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 107; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 158 b.

⁵⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 148, 156 b. ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

⁶⁰ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 197.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 197 b, 198 b, 199 b (4), 200 (3), 200 b (4), 201 (2), 201 b (2).

⁶² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 176, 178 b; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 126 b, 127.

⁶³ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 635; Coggeshall, p. 177.

⁶⁴ Holt, *Northerners*, p. 129; Painter, *King John*, pp. 336, 364.

battle of Lincoln in 1217, Falkes was in charge of his own contingent of troops.⁶⁵ William of Harcourt also played an active part in military affairs, especially during the civil war. In April 1215, he moved to Nottingham at the head of a group of soldiers to meet the king. William had returned to Corfe by August, and later the same month he was made sheriff of Yorkshire and was based at Scarborough. The castle was an isolated outpost and William's scope for action was severely limited. By March 1216, William was in the castle of Framlingham.⁶⁶ Clearly, then, the stewards of John's household had an important role to play in the military affairs of the king and, occasionally, were even sometimes to be found leading the king's field forces.

But the royal stewards had other important military duties to perform. The military role of the Angevin stewards which received the most attention from Jolliffe was that of paymaster to the king's army.⁶⁷ When Geoffrey Luttrell was told to take his 'liberaciones . . . sicut alii milites de familia nostra recipiunt', the order was attested by Peter of Stokes, King John's seneschal.⁶⁸ The imprests paid to the household knights on the Irish campaign in 1210 were given by the view of William of Harcourt.⁶⁹ When on one occasion a household knight was not present to receive his imprest, the amount was given over to the king's steward.⁷⁰ The *dona* given to the household knights in the Scottish campaign in 1209 were also paid by William de Cantilupe, who was assisted by John fitz Hugh.⁷¹ The likelihood is, therefore, that the royal stewards had some responsibility for dispensing campaign funds to the royal household knights.

Jolliffe wondered if the household knights were subject to the discipline of a single leader in the form of the steward.⁷² In Edward I's reign the steward was assisted in this task by the marshal, who also kept a record of their numbers.⁷³ The *Constitutio Domus Regis* of the mid-1130s also suggests that the marshal had a role to play in household discipline.⁷⁴ This function of the marshal as disciplinarian of the king's army may also be seen in the reign of King John. There survives on the dorse of the close rolls a text which goes by the name of the

⁶⁵ *Maréchal*, lines 16, 535–40. It is likely that Falkes was still a steward of the household at this stage in his career (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 350, 350 b).

⁶⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 152, 154, 165, 169; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, 23; Painter, *King John*, p. 355; *List of Sheriffs*, p. 161.

⁶⁷ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 218–19.

⁶⁸ *Rot. Norm.*, p. 54. ⁶⁹ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 212.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 225 (Robert of Ropsley). ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 125–6.

⁷² Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, p. 218.

⁷³ Tout, *Charters*, ii, pp. 137, 146. ⁷⁴ *Dialogus de Scaccario*, p. 134.

'Constitutions of the King's Army'.⁷⁵ This document describes in some detail how the royal army was to be organised. The entry appears on the dorse of membrane eight, which dates it to some time between 23 July and 16 August 1213 at the point when John was determined to chance his luck in France again after the victory at Damme. That the barons thwarted this attempt is well known, but this document is likely to have been placed on the close rolls for this expected campaign. Because of the appearance of two marshals for Normandy, however, it is possible that this document also reflects an earlier tradition when Normandy was in the hands of the Angevin kings.⁷⁶ We may, therefore, speculate that something like this document existed well before 1213.

There is no mention of the king's stewards in this document. Clearly they had no part to play in the discipline of the army as a whole, despite being the superior officer within the household. Like Edward I's marshals, John's marshals were the officers with responsibility for the discipline of the army, and no doubt also kept a list of those men present.⁷⁷ John's marshals swore to uphold the constitutions of the army;⁷⁸ it was they who put right any problems or punished any malefactors.⁷⁹ The image that this document gives of the duties of John's marshals can be appreciated only if we conclude that the structure of John's military household was little different from that of Edward I's time. The steward was indeed the head of the military household, just as he was the head of the whole household; but he was assisted in the task of controlling the military household by the marshals. These were the men who had the day-to-day contact with the household troops during periods in which they were on campaign; this impression is confirmed by the comments of Roger of Wendover when he was describing the army John sent to Flanders in 1214. The earl of Salisbury, Roger says, was made marshal of the royal army in Flanders, and we know from Roger that the earl did indeed play a major role in leading the king's troops at Bouvines.⁸⁰

There are no lists of the king's marshals and so we are largely left to speculate about their identities. The four named marshals in this

⁷⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 164.

⁷⁶ 'Dominus Rex habeat de qualibet terra sua duos Marescallos scilicet de Anglia Radulfum de Bray et Radulfum de Normanvill'. De Normannia Philippum de Albinaco et Engugerum de Boun; de aliis terris illos dominus Rex eliget.'

⁷⁷ Tout, *Chapters*, ii, p. 137.

⁷⁸ 'Isti [the Marshals] jurabunt quod bene et fideliter pacem ecclesie observari facient.'

⁷⁹ 'Hoc idem quilibet Baro et quilibet miles et quilibet capitalis serviens familie sue se firmiter observaturum jurabit ita quod si aliquis transgressor huius institutionis inventus fuerit Marescallis tradatur ad faciendum inde quod iustitia fuerit.'

⁸⁰ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 578–80.

document give a starting point. They were Ralph of Bray and Ralph de Normanville for England and Philip d'Albini and Engelram de Boun for Normandy. In addition, there are two other names that may be added to the list. On 28 April 1214, the household knight, Godfrey of Crowcombe, was given custody of the castle of La Rochelle by the king. In the letter declaring that the castle was to be handed over to Godfrey, he was described by John as 'marescallo nostro'.⁸¹ If we are to read literally the constitutions of the army drawn up in 1213, then presumably Godfrey was one of the marshals whom the king could 'eliget' for his other lands. Another man to appear as a household marshal was Ralph Gernun, the king's nephew, in February 1207.⁸²

Within the overarching structure of the royal military household, then, the bulk of the household knights were placed somewhere between the stewards and marshals at the top and the squires and sergeants at the bottom. It is with this group of men that this book is concerned. But within this category of household knight, individuals might vary considerably in standing. As we shall see, this distinction in standing can best be perceived in the functions which the household knights performed. There were those who seem to have been little more than fighting knights, and appear in the records mainly in relation to campaigns. And there were those household knights who were amongst the closest of John's counsellors, and appear in the records performing a multitude of tasks for the king. The same core of individuals were used as sheriffs, castellans, diplomats, and custodians of escheated lands by King John. These men were the senior members of the household, not necessarily in terms of age, but in terms of the amount of trust that the king placed in them. Examples include men such as Brian de Lisle, Falkes de Bréauté, and John Russell, all of whom eventually became stewards of the household either late in John's reign or early in the reign of Henry III;⁸³ also Robert of Ropsley, John of Bassingbourne, and Robert Peverel who, despite enjoying high favour with the king, deserted John during the civil war. Some, like Godfrey of Crowcombe and Geoffrey Luttrell, became specialists in particular fields such as diplomacy. Luttrell's services were also valued within the household itself when he was not involved in tasks *extra curiam*. Most of the knights who will be described in this book, like John of Bassingbourne, were men of considerable standing in the royal household and they were a vital arm of John's royal administration. But it is important to note that a good proportion of John's household knights did not fall

⁸¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 114.

⁸² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 77 b.

⁸³ PRO, SC1/62/4.

into this category. Of the knights who form the basis of this study, about half appeared only in the context of John's campaigning activities. This should serve to remind us that the first role of the knight in John's household was to be a warrior. Only when a man had proved himself in this field was he employed in the many tasks of Angevin royal administration.

One question remains to be addressed before we move on to the main body of the discussion: how many knights are we talking about when we refer to the body of *milites de familia regis*? The evidence strongly suggests that we are talking of a figure approaching 100 men who at any one time could be described as being knights of the royal household.⁸⁴ In the early years of the reign of Henry III, for example, the king called on the services of some 123 knights of the royal household.⁸⁵ In addition to these 123 household knights, the list also includes a further 88 knights who were brought by the household knights as their own retainers. Obviously these men should not be considered as household knights for the purposes of this study, but their presence in the household army would be extremely important. In the case of this particular campaign, the household element became a staggering 211 knights. When one considers that on the Irish campaign which John waged in 1210 there were only 800 or so named knights,⁸⁶ that the royalist forces at Stamford in 1218 and those mustered at Portsmouth in 1229 were around 500 or 600 knights,⁸⁷ then one can see just how significant a force 200-odd household troops and their retainers could be. Of course, these figures do not include the mounted sergeants who must have accompanied at least some of the household knights. In April 1216, for example, the royal household marshal Ralph Gernun entered into an agreement (an indenture even?) with the king that he would serve John with three knights and five well-armed sergeants 'for as long as the war lasts between the king and his barons'.⁸⁸ In any event, from within the

⁸⁴ For a full discussion of the evidence concerning numbers of household knights in the early thirteenth century, see S. D. Church, 'The knights of the household of King John: a question of numbers', in *Thirteenth-Century England IV: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1991*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 151-65.

⁸⁵ PRO, C72/2, m. 20.

⁸⁶ S. D. Church, 'The 1210 campaign in Ireland: evidence for a military revolution?', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 20 (1998), pp. 45-57.

⁸⁷ I. J. Sanders, *Feudal Military Service in England: a Study of the Constitutional and Military Powers of the 'Barones' in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 108-9, 121.

⁸⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 265 b; N. B. Lewis, 'An early indenture of military service, 27 July 1287', *BIHR*, 13 (1935-6), pp. 85-9; S. D. Lloyd, 'The Lord Edward's crusade, 1270-2: its setting and significance', in *War and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of J. O. Prestwich*, ed. J. Gillingham and J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 120-33.

ranks of his own household, Henry III could easily muster about one-third of the knights on any major campaign.

John, too, seems to have been able to muster a force of household knights that was every bit as formidable in its size as the one available to Henry III in the mid-1220s. Although the evidence is by no means as obvious as that for Henry III's reign, there is material to show that the numbers retained in the household on a long-term basis amounted to almost 100 knights.⁸⁹ The most significant gathering of household knights under King John seems to have been at St Albans on 18/19 December 1215, just before John was to make a devastating attack on the rebels' strongholds in the north.⁹⁰ In the document that records the names of those whom John took northwards, there were 47 men named as knights 'de hospicio domini regis'. But this was only half the army, for the other half remained in the south with the earl of Salisbury. More importantly, there were at least 50 household knights still in royal service in 1215 who did not join this particular army.⁹¹ So had all been mustered together, then the total of household knights would have approached 100. This looks like a military household every bit as significant as the one enjoyed by Henry III shortly after he entered into his majority.

If the medieval king was the helmsman of the ship of state, the royal household was the ship's engine. It comprised men from most ranks of society, from the great magnates of the realm to simple servants who looked after the day-to-day needs of the king and his court. English government, whether in peacetime or wartime, was conducted through the royal household; and amongst the most important men in the household were the knights: socially élite, militarily preeminent, and indispensable for the workings of English medieval government. It is with these men that this work is concerned.

⁸⁹ Church, 'A question of numbers', pp. 151–65.

⁹⁰ Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', pp. 1–17.

⁹¹ Church, 'A question of numbers', pp. 162–5.

RECRUITMENT INTO THE ROYAL MILITARY HOUSEHOLD

Whatever kingship was to the theorists of the middle ages, to Angevin kings its essence was the exercise of personal power. *Vis et voluntas* were the watchwords of Angevin kingship.¹ Since no king, not even the super-energetic Henry II, could be everywhere at once, to exercise personal power the Angevin kings needed the services of trusted men, men who possessed the king's personal seal of approval. There was, of course, no permanent civil service in the modern sense, even if the rudiments of it may be imagined in the clerks of the exchequer and chamber and in the increasing bureaucratisation of government in the twelfth century.² Kings, therefore, needed to recruit the men who would enable them to wield power, and high on the list of men whom kings needed to recruit were the knights of the royal household.³

The royal household was like a microcosm of the outside world in that underpinning the whole edifice was the fundamental relationship between two men: a senior and a junior, a lord and a man. It was a relationship founded on the oath of fealty, and it was a relationship that demanded not only mutual obligation, but also that most difficult of human emotions to acquire, and most easy to lose, the feeling of mutual trust. Hence the oath of fealty was a personal bond automatically broken on the death of one or other of the contractors.⁴ Of course in the world outside the household, the emergence and eventual success of demands for inheritance meant that few lords were able to determine the identity of the mass of commended men who held lands from them. But within the household it was a different matter. To be sure, there

¹ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 50–86; R. V. Turner, 'King John's concept of royal authority', *History of Political Thought*, 17 (1996), pp. 157–78.

² M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (Oxford, 2nd edn, 1993), pp. 57–73.

³ See ch. 3.

⁴ M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans L. A. Manyon (London, 2nd edn, 1962), p. 161.

were hereditary household positions, particularly within the royal household, but the men who held these offices had little role to play in the day-to-day functions of the king's household. Their duties were confined to the great formal occasions of state such as the king's coronation.⁵ The men who held real power and sway in the royal household were the men whom the king knew and, above all, trusted.

The problems that confronted every royal servant on the death of his master have found a resonance in many medieval sources. The new king was under no obligation to retain the servants of his predecessor, though equally the old king's servants were under no obligation to serve his successor. Some kings were thoughtful enough to attempt to provide for the continued service of their men. On his death-bed in 1066, for example, Edward the Confessor is reported to have asked Harold to retain in his service those who had 'left their native land' for Edward, or to allow them to return home peacefully with their possessions.⁶ Others, however, were not so thoughtful. When Henry I came to the throne in 1100, he seems to have undertaken a near wholesale removal of the old king's servants from royal service.⁷ Equally ruthless in his clearout of the old king's men was Richard I who, with notable exceptions such as William Marshal, dispensed with the services of many of his father's servants.⁸ To the new king, the old king's servants were often unknown quantities; they had yet to prove their qualities. Those men whom the new king brought with him from his time as king-in-waiting were, therefore, at a decided advantage when the scramble commenced for the new king's attention. Recognising this, some men chose to woo the potential claimant to the throne preparing the ground for the eventual takeover. William Marshal, to cite the most famous example, was accused by his enemies of laying in a store of benefits with Count John during Richard's reign.⁹ Whether this accusation was justified is neither here nor there; what is important is that contemporaries saw this type of activity as a recognised tactic, if perhaps a little underhand.

The dangers of not laying in a store of benefits with the king-in-waiting are graphically illustrated by the case of Everard de la Beuvrière. Everard was one of Richard I's household knights who, from 1197, enjoyed the profits from holding the royal manor of Saham, Norfolk,

⁵ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 190–2.

⁶ *The Life of King Edward who Rests at Westminster*, ed. F. Barlow (Oxford, 2nd edn, 1992), pp. 124–5.

⁷ J. Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 215.

⁸ Holt, *Northmen*, p. 218.

⁹ *Maréchal*, line 10,326.

valued at the exchequer at £27 8s 4d per annum.¹⁰ After Richard's death, John removed Saham from Everard's control, commuting it to the payment of a 50 mark annual fief, but still retaining Everard in his service.¹¹ The monetary payment would clearly be easier to suspend if Everard proved to be an untrustworthy or incompetent man. In Everard's case, John was happy with his services, as is shown by the assignment in 1200 of the royal manors of Lower Slaughter and Westall, Gloucestershire, for his sustenance in royal service.¹²

The untimely death of Richard at Châlus in April 1199 left the Angevin empire with two rival claimants to its rule, Arthur of Brittany and John, count of Mortain. The author of the *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis* said that as soon as John heard of his brother's death, he, in the best traditions of heirs apparent, rushed to take control of the Angevin treasury, which was kept at Chinon. The treasurer, Robert of Thornham, handed the keys of the treasury over to John, who was thus well on the way to establishing a stronger claim to the Angevin realm than his rival.¹³ The death of Richard inevitably meant that the contracts between the king and his servants were dissolved, and that any contracts between them and the new king had to be negotiated anew. The only way to negotiate those contracts was to confront John. On the very same day that John took control of the Angevin treasury, the members of the old king's *familia*, therefore, went to Chinon to ingratiate themselves with the man who seemed most likely to win out in the impending succession struggle.¹⁴ Their attempts, it seems, succeeded, as the chronicler Roger of Wendover tells us that John 'retained with honour all his brother's servants and stipendiary knights', and furthermore, 'he promised them many giftes', presumably as an incentive for their continued support in the forthcoming struggle with Arthur of Brittany.¹⁵

Although it is not possible with any clarity to see the totality of Richard I's household knights, we are able to speculate about the identities of some of these men, and we can show that these men indeed found their way into the ranks of John's *milites de familia*. John Russell, for example, a household knight under King John and eventually to become a steward of the royal household under Henry III, started his career in Richard's household. In 1195 or 1196, he received a payment for a journey he undertook to Ireland as a royal messenger. The

¹⁰ *Book of Fees*, p. 1,324; *Pipe Rolls of Richard 1*, p. 77; 1 *John*, p. 262.

¹¹ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 3.

¹² *Book of Fees*, p. 51; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 4.

¹³ *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, 2 vols., ed. D. L. Douie and D. H. Farmer (Oxford, 1985), ii, p. 138.

¹⁴ 'Familia quoque regis defuncti ibidem constituta se ad ipsum contulit eadem die' (ibid., p. 137).

¹⁵ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 452.

payment was to cover the cost of a rouncy, a robe, and any other travelling expenses he incurred in the course of his mission.¹⁶ In 1198 or 1199, John received payment for himself and nineteen mounted sergeants he was leading at a rate of 9d a day.¹⁷ Robert Peverel also saw service with King Richard before moving into King John's household. He was with his king in Normandy in 1194, 1198, and 1199, and he was with Richard at Chinon just fourteen days before his death.¹⁸ After Richard's death, Robert remained on the continent where he seems to have taken an active role in the defence of Normandy.¹⁹ It is possible to see that there were other men who made the leap from the household of Richard I to that of John; for example, Alberic de Marines,²⁰ Everard de la Beuvrière,²¹ William de Gamaches,²² and Baldwin de Béthune.²³

As well as taking men into his service from Richard's household, John also found places amongst the ranks of his *milites de familia* for those men who had served him when he was count of Mortain. Admittedly the evidence for John's comital household is very meagre indeed, especially for the period 1194 to 1199. Of the one hundred and eighty-odd *acta* that survive for John before he became king, just sixteen date from those last five years; this inevitably makes it difficult to be certain just who was in John's comital household in the years before he succeeded to Richard's lands. Indeed, it is quite likely that John's circumstances were reduced during this period and that his household was, as a consequence, much diminished in size from the one he had enjoyed before Richard's return from captivity in 1194.²⁴ An analysis of John's comital *acta* confirms this impression.

Very few of the men who were so prominent in John's comital *acta* during the years before 1194 stayed with the count after his fall from

¹⁶ *Chancellor's Roll 8 Richard I*, p. 20.

¹⁷ *Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 129.

¹⁸ *Pipe Rolls 6 Richard I*, p. 230; *9 Richard I*, p. 223; Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I*, p. 144.

¹⁹ *Pipe Rolls 1 John*, p. 128; *3 John*, p. 88; *4 John*, p. 143; *5 John*, p. 197; *Curia Regis Rolls*, iii, p. 50.

²⁰ *Pipe Rolls 2 Richard I*, p. 2; *3 Richard I*, p. 136. He then served John in Poitou for a number of years (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 68).

²¹ See pp. 17–18.

²² *Pipe Roll 9 Richard I*, p. 121; *Book of Fees*, p. 1,270.

²³ *Maréchal*, lines 10,121–36, 13,183–233; E. Warlop, *The Flemish Nobility before 1300*, 4 vols. (Kortrijk, 1976), ii, 1, p. 666; B. English, *The Lords of Holderness, 1086–1260: a Study in Feudal Society* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 32–5; A. Du Chesne, *Histoire généalogique de la maison de Béthune* (Paris, 1639), pp. 149–52, 156; Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 484–5.

²⁴ The classic comment, and the one to which everyone turns, is that made by the biographer of St Hugh of Lincoln, who tells of the occasion when the newly consecrated King John was rather backward in handing over his offering at the feast of the Resurrection. When St Hugh enquired as to the reason for John's delay in giving his gift, John was made to respond by St Hugh's biographer: 'I am looking at these [twelve] gold pieces and thinking that if I had had them a few days ago I would not have delivered them to you, but have pocketed them; but now you can take them' (*Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis*, ii, p. 142).

grace. For the most part John's comital household seems to have been largely disbanded. Men like master Benedict de Romis, occasionally styled by John in his *acta* as *sigillario meo*,²⁵ witnessed none of John's *acta* after 1195. Neither did Roger of Newborough, John's *dapifer* between 1189 and 1191,²⁶ witness any of the count's *acta* after 1194. Most significantly for this discussion, two very important men in John's comital household also ceased to witness his *acta*. Theobald Walter, John's butler of Ireland and a man who witnessed forty-two of the count's *acta* between 1185 and 1194,²⁷ and Stephen Ridel, John's chancellor and attestor of fifty-four of his *acta* between 1189 and 1194,²⁸ witnessed nothing after 1194. Both of these men seem to have actually deserted John for Richard on the king's return from captivity in 1194.²⁹ It seems unlikely that these two men were the only defectors from John's camp in 1194. Richard was only 36 and although life could certainly be short in this period, Richard had just survived over two years on crusade and a year in captivity. It was a fair bet that Richard would be at the head of the Angevin empire for some years to come, and John's erstwhile supporters might easily have concluded that it was better to patch up any differences they had with Richard and leave John to his own devices.

But this was clearly not the policy that everyone would choose to follow. The Marshal for one was accused by his contemporaries of laying in a store of good will with John, who was clearly the favourite to succeed Richard in the event of the king dying without issue, a distinct possibility given the king's relationship with his queen.³⁰ Even if Richard did produce an heir, John would have been in a powerful position for many years to come. If John's comital *acta* are anything to go by, the accusation that the Marshal was hedging his bets may indeed have had some foundation. The Marshal is to be found attesting twelve of John's *acta*, four of which came in the period June 1195 to October

²⁵ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', no. 77.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 73.

²⁷ *Deputy Keeper Ireland 23rd Report*, p. 76; B: Bodleian Libr. MS Dugdale 39, fo 82 (16C); *Early Lancs Charters*, pp. 298–300; *Berkeley Castle Charters*, p. 21; B: Ctl. Tresham, Northants RO, Misc. Ledger 383, pp. 300–1 (15C); Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 2, 5, 7, 19, 22, 23, 26, 31, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 51, 52, 56, 60, 64, 65, 69, 77, 80, 83, 87, 88, 89, 90, 93, 94, 98, 99, 113, 119.

²⁸ *Deputy Keeper Ireland 23rd Report*, p. 76; B: Ctl. Godstow, PRO, E164/20, fo 167 (15C); *Bristol Charters*, p. 8; *Reading Charters*, pp. 546, 42; B: Ctl. Bath, BL Egerton MS 3316, fos 18v–20; B: Ctl. Launceston, Lambeth Palace Libr. MS 719, fos 215–215v; *Gormanston Reg.*, p. 129; *Berkeley Castle Charters*, p. 21; Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 36, 37, 38, 41, 44, 49, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 62, 72, 73, 74, 77, 79, 82, 83, 84, 86, 89, 92, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 103, 105, 106, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 126, 127, 156.

²⁹ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', pp. 77–9.

³⁰ *Maréchal*, line 10,326.

1197.³¹ Members of John's comital household also kept in with the heir apparent during his years in the wilderness. For example, Fulk de Cantilupe remained with the count, and witnessed six of his sixteen *acta* between June 1195 and December 1198.³² William de Wenneval, John's *dapifer*, witnessed two *acta* between 1195 and 1198.³³ Peter des Préaux witnessed six *acta* issued between 1197 and 1198.³⁴ William de Cantilupe, Fulk de Cantilupe's nephew, witnessed two comital *acta* in 1198. The first was dated 12 July 1198 when he was styled 'tunc senescallus';³⁵ the second was dated 4 December 1198, just a few months before Richard's death.³⁶ With the exception of William de Wenneval, who disappears from view, each of these men entered into the higher echelons of the royal household on John's accession: William de Cantilupe became one of the king's stewards of the household with Peter of Stokes and Robert of Thornham;³⁷ Fulk de Cantilupe became a senior household knight;³⁸ Peter des Préaux remained a prominent royal servant until his death sometime after 1207;³⁹ in addition William de Wenneval's son entered royal service as a household knight during the Irish campaign in 1210.⁴⁰ Other members of John's comital household kept faith with their master during the lean years between 1194 and 1199. Hubert de Burgh, John's chamberlain, Ralph of Cirencester, the count's clerk, and John de Gray, his chancellor, can all be found amongst the witness lists of the sixteen *acta* that date from these years.⁴¹ When John took control of the Angevin lands in 1199, all these men stepped from the comital household into the royal household. Hubert de Burgh became the new king's chamberlain, Ralph of Cirencester became his clerk, and John de Gray was retained in the royal chancery.⁴²

There were yet others who, although they did not seem to remain with John during the lean years after 1194, still managed to get themselves a place in the royal household. Engelram des Préaux, for example, who witnessed thirty *acta* between 1185 and 1195,⁴³ witnessed

³¹ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 125, 130, 131, 132.

³² Ibid., nos. 125, 133, 135, 138, 139, 141.

³³ Ibid., nos. 125, 137.

³⁴ Ibid., nos. 130, 133, 134, 138, 139, 140.

³⁵ *Ancient Deeds*, iv, A. 6686; *Ancient Charters*, p. 110.

³⁶ *Gormanston Reg.*, pp. 190–1.

³⁷ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 1.

³⁸ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 516.

³⁹ Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 350.

⁴⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 212.

⁴¹ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 125, 129, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 141, 158.

⁴² Ibid., p. 5.

⁴³ *Deputy Keeper Ireland 23rd Report*, p. 76; *Early Lancs. Charters*, pp. 298–300; *Reading Charters*, p. 546; *Carew MSS*, misc., p. 443; *Gormanston Reg.*, p. 129; Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 56, 63, 69, 73, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 87, 91, 92, 95, 96, 102, 103, 107, 113, 116, 119, 120, 121, 127, 156.

nothing between 1195 and 1199; despite dropping out of the comital household, he could be found operating as a royal household knight as early as May 1201,⁴⁴ though perhaps not at the level one might expect for someone who had played a prominent role in John's household before 1194. The same could be said of Philip of Worcester, who witnessed fifteen comital *acta* before 1194,⁴⁵ and then dropped out of the comital household to reappear in the royal household, though not at a very high level.⁴⁶

At the more junior end of the knightly establishment we can also see men moving from the comital to the royal retinue. Geoffrey Luttrell, for example, witnessed one of John's *acta* before 1191 and had his land in Nottinghamshire seized in 1194 for his role in Count John's rebellion, making it quite likely that he had a close connection with John, even if it was not strictly as a member of the household.⁴⁷ In 1196, Geoffrey was overseeing the building works on Nottingham gaol, which must mean that he had been restored to favour along with John in 1195.⁴⁸ Whether Geoffrey became a royal household knight in 1199 is a moot point, but by July 1202, he certainly was a household knight when the steward, Peter of Stokes, told him to take his 'liberaciones . . . sicut alii milites de familia nostra recipiunt'.⁴⁹ Geoffrey remained an important household knight until his death at the end of the reign.

The brothers Luke and Ralph de Trumbleville also transferred from John's comital into his royal household. The brothers had been introduced to John's service by their relations, William and Robert de Trumbleville. Luke de Trumbleville witnessed five comital *acta* between 1189 and 1194, whilst his brother, Ralph, witnessed four between 1189 and 1195.⁵⁰ Both brothers had long and successful careers in John's royal household. It seems likely that Hugh Malebisse also started his career in John's comital household. Hugh witnessed two comital *acta* between 1195 and 1198, and as early as March 1200 was to be found amongst the king's witnesses to one of his charters.⁵¹ Other men who appeared as witnesses in Count John's *acta* and who also made the transition to the royal household in 1199 were Walter de Verdun, Alan

⁴⁴ Rot. Lib. John, p. 13.

⁴⁵ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 23, 35, 51, 61, 88, 90, 99; B: Ctl. Tresham, Northants RO, Misc. Ledger 383, pp. 300–1 (15C).

⁴⁶ Rot. Lib. John, p. 162.

⁴⁷ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', no. 70; *Pipe Rolls 6 Richard I*, p. 84; *7 Richard I*, p. 21; *Chancellor's Roll 8 Richard I*, p. 270.

⁴⁸ *Chancellor's Roll 8 Richard I*, p. 266.

⁴⁹ Rot. Norm., pp. 46, 53, 55, 58.

⁵⁰ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 73, 93, 94, 95, 107, 124, 127, p. 73; B: Ctl. Bath, BL Egerton MS 3316, fos 18v–20.

⁵¹ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 125, 137; Rot. Chart., p. 42 b.

de Dunstanville, William de Avenel, Richard le Waleys, Adam de St-Martin,⁵² and Henry de Turberville.⁵³

The basic message seems to be that those who remained high in John's favour as king-in-waiting remained high in his favour after his accession. These were the men who had proved themselves and had stuck with John through good times and bad; this is particularly so of those men who remained loyal to John after 1194. But even those who had felt it prudent to withdraw from John's service after 1194 might still find a place in the ranks of the household knights if they had not actually turned against their lord when Richard returned from captivity. So there was still room for the likes of Engelram des Préaux and Fulk de Cantilupe amongst the ranks of the *milites de familia regis*, even if they had not shown the steadfast loyalty John might have wanted from his men. What also strikes one about the evidence is just how biased John was in favour of the men from his own household. Roger of Wendover may have thought that John took all his brother's 'servants and stipendiary knights' into his service, but there is precious little evidence to show that Richard's household knights made a big impression on the household of King John. In fact, the impression given by the evidence is that the royal household in the early years of John's reign was one which was very much dominated by John's comital following. Of course, this may be a fault of the evidence: we know, for example, that Thomas Basset was one of Richard's household knights, and he was to find immortality as one of John's 'consiliarios iniquissimos'.⁵⁴ Yet he never appears in the records as one of John's *milites de familia*. It may be suggested that Thomas had risen above this status by the time that the record evidence becomes detailed enough to show the mass of the household knights. But we might counter this suggestion by pointing out that others amongst Wendover's 'consiliarios iniquissimos', who appeared higher up the order than Thomas Basset, such as Brian de Lisle, John of Bassingbourne, Falkes de Bréauté, and Fulk de Cantilupe, were in other places called household knights. It seems to me much more likely that Thomas was indeed one of John's household knights; the evidence to that fact simply evades us. But even if this supposition is correct, it does not counter the weight of the evidence, which is that John preferred to take men who he knew into positions of trust in his new royal household, and, by and large, this meant men whom he had

⁵² Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 88, 90, 91, 112, 125, 148; *Rot. Curia Regis*, i, p. 81.

⁵³ *Pipe Roll 7 Richard I*, p. 234; *Chancellor's Roll 8 Richard I*, p. 218.

⁵⁴ *Cartae Antiquae Rolls*, p. 315, where he was described as 'miles noster' for Richard by his clerk. He witnessed a number of Richard's *acta* (Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I*, pp. 118, 123, 132, 134, 142, 143, 144); *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 532-3.

known when he was count of Mortain and lord of Ireland. Those who had not known him well at that point in his career were at an initial disadvantage when the scramble started for positions of power in the new regime.

This picture of a king determined to know those men who became *militēs de familia regis*, even if that knowledge was, initially, through a third party, can be seen in the way that many men started upon a career in royal service. Kinship ties with those already in royal service played a major role in allowing men to gain entry to the clique of royal *familiares*. Walter of Clifford jnr and his brother Roger, for example, were following in a long family tradition when they both appeared in the royal household in 1209.⁵⁵ Their father, Walter of Clifford snr, was a major marcher baron who had served in the household of Henry II. Walter snr held the honour of Clifford, Herefordshire, assessed at nine knights' fees, and one fee in Cortham, Shropshire.⁵⁶ The brothers continued to serve in John's household until the very end of the reign and also lent their support to the subsequent minority government. Likewise, Henry IV de la Pomeroy owed his entry into John's household to a long family tradition of royal service. He came from a major west country baronial family whose honour of Berry Pomeroy was based in Devon and amounted to some thirty-two knights' fees.⁵⁷ This family's record of service in the royal household spanned several generations. Henry's great-grandfather, Henry I de la Pomeroy, served in the household of Henry I where he appeared in the compilation known as the *Constitutio Domus Regis* as one of the king's household constables.⁵⁸ This Henry de la Pomeroy was the leader of the king's household troops on a number of occasions, most notably at the battle of Bourgethroulde.⁵⁹ It is unclear whether Henry IV de la Pomeroy's father, Henry III, was also in the king's household, though he did witness three of King John's charters, and was constable of those knights of Devon and Cornwall who went to Poitou in 1206.⁶⁰ On the death of Henry III de la Pomeroy in 1207, his lands were given into the custody of William Brewer.⁶¹ Brewer held on to the Pomeroy lands until 1210,

⁵⁵ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

⁵⁶ *Book of Fees*, pp. 146, 798, 799, 802, 808, 810, 811, 812; J. O. Prestwich, 'Military household', p. 12; Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 36; Dugdale, *Baronage*, p. 336 a–b.

⁵⁷ *Red Book*, p. 558; Sanders, *English Baronies*, pp. 106–7; Dugdale, *Baronage*, p. 498 b; E. B. Powley, *The House of De La Pomerai* (Liverpool, 1944), pp. 23, 26–7.

⁵⁸ *Dialogus de Scaccario*, p. 134; Powley, *The House of De La Pomerai*, pp. 15–16.

⁵⁹ Chibnall, 'Mercenaries and the *familia regis* under Henry I', p. 19.

⁶⁰ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 16, 115 b, 130 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 71 b.

⁶¹ *Pipe Roll 9 John*, p. 77; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 405.

when Henry IV found the necessary pledges for the fine of 600 marks which he was required to pay to enter into his inheritance.⁶² The first mention of Henry IV de la Pomeroy as a knight of the royal household occurred in 1214, though we may suspect that he was a household knight from at least 1210 when he accompanied the king on the Irish expedition.⁶³

The family of Henry II de Longchamp also had a long and distinguished record of royal service. Henry's father, Henry I de Longchamp, served Richard I and witnessed twenty-seven of the king's *acta*.⁶⁴ He was a royal household knight and in 1190 was sent to York with other members of the king's *familia* after the massacre of the Jews.⁶⁵ He was the king's sheriff in Herefordshire between 1189 and 1191. Henry was removed from this office at the same time as his brother, the chancellor William de Longchamp, was deposed by Walter of Coutances.⁶⁶ Henry I de Longchamp's second brother, Stephen, went with Richard on the third crusade and, as the king's steward, witnessed seventy-three of his *acta*, and played a prominent part in this crusade.⁶⁷ Henry I de Longchamp seems to have found his way into John's service despite the differences which he and his brother had had with John when he was count of Mortain, although whether he was a household knight or not remains uncertain.⁶⁸ It is probable that Henry I de Longchamp went on the ill-fated fourth crusade, for he and his wife, Matilda, received letters of protection for their lands while they were on pilgrimage.⁶⁹ Whether he died on crusade is not clear, but in 1204 his widow received £10 of dower land in Wilton, Herefordshire.⁷⁰ Henry I de Longchamp's second son, Henry II de Longchamp, inherited his father's land and castle of Wilton in March 1207.⁷¹ By the time of the Irish campaign in 1210 he had moved into the ranks of the king's household knights.⁷²

All these men had pedigrees of long and loyal service in the royal

⁶² *Rot. Fin.*, pp. 435–6; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 23; *Pipe Rolls 10 John*, p. 61; *12 John*, p. 166; *13 John*, p. 130.

⁶³ *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, p. 170, where Henry described himself as being 'de privata familia domini regis'; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 205, 221.

⁶⁴ Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I*, pp. 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26, 127.

⁶⁵ *Pipe Roll 2 Richard I*, p. 8.

⁶⁶ *Pipe Rolls 1 Richard I*, p. 141; *2 Richard I*, pp. 6, 45; *4 Richard I*, p. 293; Warren, *King John*, pp. 42–3.

⁶⁷ Landon, *Itinerary of Richard I*, pp. 8, 10–12, 14, 18–23, 25, 26, 30, 33, 53, 63, 65, 79, 151.

⁶⁸ *Rot. Curia Regis*, ii, pp. 121–2; *Lincs. Assize Rolls*, p. 18.

⁶⁹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 11 b.

⁷⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 84.

⁷¹ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 146 b–147; *Pipe Rolls 8 John*, p. 68; *9 John*, p. 159; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 38 b.

⁷² *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 212.

household. Their relatives had based their fortunes on royal service and were major baronial families in the kingdom, and the men were following an established tradition when they became knights of the household of King John. Two of them were elder sons and were therefore set to inherit their fathers' lands. Royal service for them must have been a way to gain much needed experience and to establish themselves in royal circles. The other two men who entered the royal household from this upbringing were younger sons and were therefore following the path of royal service in order to successfully maintain themselves and their heirs in the baronial society from whence they had come. There were, however, also knights in John's household who came from far more humble backgrounds and whose families were just beginning on this road to power and prosperity.

The household squire and later knight, Thomas Sturmy, came from just such inauspicious beginnings. Thomas was a younger son of Geoffrey Sturmy who held by sergeanty in Burbage and Cowsfield, Wiltshire. The Sturmy land in this county can be traced back to a Richard Sturmid, a baron in both Wiltshire and Hampshire at the time of the Domesday Inquiry. By the time of Geoffrey Sturmy, the family had descended somewhat from these heights, holding just Burbage and Cowsfield by sergeanty, lands which would later make the elder branch of Geoffrey Sturmy's family wardens of Savernack forest.⁷³ Geoffrey Sturmy was almost certainly a close adherent of Count John, since he was disseised in 1194 for his part in the revolt against Richard, and may also have attested one of the count's *acta*.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, Geoffrey Sturmy managed to obtain a place for his younger son, Thomas, in King John's household as a squire, and it was as such that Thomas Sturmy began his career in royal service.⁷⁵

The Cantilupe family provided John with a number of loyal servants for both his comital and his royal households. William de Cantilupe, John's steward from 1198, witnessed four of John's comital *acta*.⁷⁶ William's introduction to the count's household came through his uncle, Fulk de Cantilupe, and his father, Walter. Two other household

⁷³ *VCH Wilts.*, ii, pp. 72–7; xii, p. 37.

⁷⁴ *Book of Fees*, pp. 11, 13; it is clear that Thomas was Geoffrey Sturmy's second son. In 1198 Geoffrey proffered 500 marks for the restitution of his land (*Pipe Roll 9 Richard I*, p. 216). In 1199 his elder son, Henry, was regarded as being responsible for the fine (*Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 173). The connection between Thomas and Henry appeared when together they stood surety for Wilken de Luveretis to enter into his inheritance in Wiltshire (*Rot. Fin.*, pp. 473, 478–9). Thomas Sturmy also dutifully called his son Geoffrey (*Curia Regis Rolls*, xiii, no. 115); Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', no. 158.

⁷⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 3; *Pipe Roll 6 John*, p. 120.

⁷⁶ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 93, 95, 139, 141.

knights of King John also seem to have owed their entry to their association with the Cantilupes. Robert Barat, who was in the royal household by 1209,⁷⁷ was described as William de Cantilupe's brother on a number of occasions, and seems to have been a son of Walter de Cantilupe.⁷⁸ In January 1223, William de Cantilupe was given custody of Robert's son and heir, later named as Eustace de Cantilupe.⁷⁹ It is unclear why Robert should take a name other than that of his father, especially as he passed the Cantilupe name onto his son. Perhaps he was an illegitimate son of Walter de Cantilupe. The second of the household knights of King John who probably owed his entry into the household through the Cantilupes was Roger Orgete. Roger also made his first appearance in the household in 1209.⁸⁰ On the Irish campaign in 1210, Roger was described as Robert Barat's brother,⁸¹ and in 1213 was to be found receiving 100 marks for William de Cantilupe, who was conducting a campaign in Wales.⁸² No doubt Roger Orgete, as well as Robert Barat, owed his successful entry into the royal household to this association with the Cantilupes.

The kinship ties of William des Préaux also eased his passage into the royal household. William came from a large Norman family who served the kings of England during both Richard's and John's reigns.⁸³ His brothers, Engelram and Peter, were close adherents of John when he was count of Mortain and later when king of England; indeed, Engelram was also a royal household knight.⁸⁴ William des Préaux seems to have played an important role in the defence of Normandy before 1204 when he was responsible for controlling the bailiwick of the Lieuvain and for provisioning certain royal strongholds in the duchy.⁸⁵ After 1204, William stayed in Normandy, only to come back to royal service when he returned to England in 1215.⁸⁶ Finally Gilbert de Sanes, nephew of Henry de Bernavall, Queen Eleanor's steward, also served as a knight in John's household.⁸⁷

⁷⁷ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

⁷⁸ *Pipe Rolls 3 John*, p. 201; 4 *John*, p. 5; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 531 b; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 314.

⁷⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 531 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, p. 37 b.

⁸⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 180, 212.

⁸² *Docs. of English History*, p. 250.

⁸³ Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 350, 341.

⁸⁴ *Deputy Keeper Ireland 23rd Report*, p. 76; *Reading Charters*, p. 546; *Barts. Hospital Cart.*, p. 143; *Gormaston Reg.*, p. 129; Preen, 'The acta of Count John', nos. 56, 63, 69, 73, 78, 79, 80, 82, 83, 87, 91, 92, 95, 96, 102, 103, 107, 113, 116, 119, 120, 121, 127, 130, 133, 134, 138, 139, 140, 156, 169; Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 350; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 13.

⁸⁵ *Rot. Norm.*, pp. 58 (2), 74, 86, 87, 89–90, 103, 116; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 78, 82; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 36 b.

⁸⁶ *Rot. Norm.*, p. 126; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 140 b; Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 17.

⁸⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 43; *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 8, 114, 121; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 126.

The Household Knights of King John

Once a man had entered the royal household he could then extend a helping hand to other members of his kin group. Thomas Peverel's brother, Robert Peverel, had started his career in the household of Richard I, before transferring to John's royal household. Serving as a knight of the royal household from 1207 to the end of John's reign, Thomas almost certainly entered the royal household through the benefaction of his brother.⁸⁸ Walter de Verdun was the second son of Ralph de Verdun, who held the manor of Bloxham, Oxfordshire.⁸⁹ Both Walter and his elder brother, William, were witnesses to two of Count John's *acta*, and Walter entered the royal household on John's accession in 1199.⁹⁰ Ralph and Luke de Trumbleville were also inducted into John's comital household around 1189 by William de Trumbleville, a relation who was already in the count's service.⁹¹ They, in their turn, brought their younger brothers, Luke and Reginald de Drumare, into the royal household towards the end of John's reign.⁹² Finally, William de Bréauté, brother of Falkes de Bréauté, was one of John's squires.⁹³

Kinship ties of one sort or another clearly played an important part in the advancement of many of John's knights into his households, both royal and comital. Personal recommendation obviously carried weight with John, and he seems to have looked with favour on those men whose family members had already proved themselves in his household. The case of Alan II de Dunstanville shows just how interconnected these ties of family and patronage might be. Alan's father, Alan I de Dunstanville, before his death sometime before Michaelmas 1195, had witnessed one of Count John's charters. He also seems to have acted as a custodian of escheated lands, in 1189 holding the lands of Gerard de Grenville in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire.⁹⁴ In 1200, Alan's lands were being held by William de Cantilupe, the king's steward;⁹⁵ and by 1205, they were being held by Hubert de Burgh, the king's chamberlain.⁹⁶ Alan II de Dunstanville's uncle, Walter de Dunstanville, held twenty-one and a quarter knights' fees in Wiltshire and, before his death in 1194, was a regular attestor of John's early comital *acta*.⁹⁷ There

⁸⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 93 b, 106 b.

⁸⁹ *Pipe Roll 6 John*, pp. 106, 111; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 55; *VCH Oxon.*, ix, p. 60.

⁹⁰ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 88, 89, 90, 120.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 2, 7, 19, 37, 43, 45, 73, 93, 94, 95, 107, 112, 124, 127.

⁹² Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 17.

⁹³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 120; *Patent Roll 1216-25*, p. 19.

⁹⁴ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', no. 148; *Pipe Roll 1 Richard I*, p. 32.

⁹⁵ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 1-2; *Rot. Chart.*, p. 175-175b.

⁹⁶ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 329; *Pipe Rolls 8 John*, p. 148; *9 John*, p. 76.

⁹⁷ Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees*, iii, p. 38; Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', nos. 61, 67, 73, 77, 79, 82, 83, 85, 107, 109, 117, 121, 149; B: Ctl. Tresham, Northants RO, Misc. Ledger 383, 300-1 (15C); *Reading Charters*, p. 42.

were, therefore, any number of ways in which Alan II de Dunstanville might have been introduced to the ranks of the *milites de familia regis*, and it may well be that the sheer number of his connections made his entry all the more easy.

Although it is not particularly easy to perceive the passage of a knight from a baronial household to the royal household, it is clear that a start in a baronial household could lead to the ultimate accolade of a place in the royal household. But how did John acquire these knights? Did the king play an active role in appropriating knights to his household from other lords, or did individual lords actively seek to place their men in the royal household in order to gain some personal advantage for themselves? These two suggestions are, of course, not mutually exclusive. Some lords may well have been happy to see some of their men in royal service; others, however, were clearly not. Richard fitz Nigel, for one, seemed to think that the Angevin kings might second any man into royal service if the king deemed it necessary.⁹⁸ Some lords, however, tried to legislate against their retainers being poached by another lord. For example, one of John's household knights, William de Bosco, was involved in a case resulting from his move from the household of William de Coleville to that of the king. The case described how Bosco entered the service of Coleville in return for a quarter of a knight's fee in Muston, Leicestershire. Sometime before the Michaelmas Term of 1200, Coleville confiscated this land and Bosco took his claim to the king's court. When Coleville came to the court to defend his actions he claimed that he had entered into an agreement with Bosco which stipulated that if Bosco were to do homage to another man or leave Coleville's *familia*, and therefore give up his service to him, then the land in Muston would be forfeit.⁹⁹ Unfortunately the outcome of this dispute is not recorded, but it is clear that Coleville was well aware that his man could be tempted away from his service and tried to ensure that if this occurred, any lands he had given in return for that service would not be permanently lost to him.¹⁰⁰

It is clear that not all lords felt the same way as William de Coleville, and we may suspect that some actually encouraged a few of their men

⁹⁸ *Dialogus de Scaccario*, p. 84.

⁹⁹ 'que testatur quod convencio inter Willelmum de Colevill' et ipsum Willelmum de Bosco de terra de Muston' talis est quod, si idem Willelmus de Bosco humagium faceret alicui alii vel de familia alicuius devenisset et eius servicium relinqueret, tunc clamaret ei quietam terram suam de Muston et cartam suam ei redderet et, si in servicio eius existeret, terra ei remaneret et, si aliquis per placitum recuperasset terram illam versus Willelmum de Bosco, ipse vel heredes sui non possent escambium ab eo exigere vel de heredibus suis' (*Curia Regis Rolls*, i, p. 315).

¹⁰⁰ It is likely that William de Coleville won his case since his heirs were in control of Muston in 1242 (*Book of Fees*, p. 953).

to enter the royal household in order to accrue benefits for themselves. The earl of Derby, for example, may have been instrumental in placing two of his men into the royal household. The first, and least important of the two, was Robert Tybotot. Tybotot held a knight's fee of the earl in Wymondham and Thorpe, Leicestershire.¹⁰¹ In August 1209, Tybotot received a 2 mark *donum* as a knight of the king's household in the army that went to Scotland.¹⁰² By September 1216, however, Tybotot was back in the service of the earl when he was described as one of the earl's knights.¹⁰³ The second, and by far the more successful, of the two knights whom the earl may have placed in the royal household was Ralph fitz Nicholas. Ralph entered the royal household at much the same time as Tybotot. He received *dona* of 20 shillings and half a mark in August 1209 and spent the rest of the reign in John's household.¹⁰⁴ After John's death, Ralph returned to the earl's household as his steward;¹⁰⁵ by 1224, he was once again to be found in the royal household, this time as the king's steward. Since it is apparent that the earl was keen to have at least one of his own men in the royal household, the obvious question is what sort of benefits did the earl think he would gain from this policy?

The answers to this question must necessarily be tentative since the earl did not see fit to set down in writing the reasons for his desire to place two of his men in the royal household. It is possible, though, to offer some reasons as to his motivation. There were clear financial and political benefits to be had from placing one's own man within the royal circle, especially if that man rose high in royal favour, as was the case with Ralph fitz Nicholas. Men within the royal circle were amongst the first to hear of wardships and marriages which were about to come up. As Scott Waugh has shown, proximity to the king and speed in making a bid were of the utmost importance if requests for such lucrative gains were to be successful.¹⁰⁶ The lord's man at court would no doubt make his master aware of any such custodies which would allow the lord to make a quick bid for those in which he had an interest. One might also expect that there were political advantages for a

¹⁰¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 2, 3 b; *Book of Fees*, p. 947.

¹⁰² *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

¹⁰³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 285 b.

¹⁰⁴ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 124, 126, 150; *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 559–64.

¹⁰⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 406 a–b; B: Ctl. Okeaver, Bodleian Libr. MS Wood empt 6. fos 32v–33; B: Ctl. St James, Northants, BL Cotton Tiberius MS E.v, fo 45; B: Ctl. Bredon, John Rylands Library, Manchester, MS Latin 222, fos 33v–34; B: Bodleian Libr. MS Dugdale 15, p. 37. As the earl's steward, Ralph was probably following in the footsteps of his father, Nicholas fitz Pain, the earl's 'dapifer' before 1190 (*Reading Charters*, p. 1,065; *HMC Middleton*, pp. 5–6).

¹⁰⁶ S. L. Waugh, *The Lordship of England: Royal Wardship and Marriages in English Society and Politics, 1217–1327* (Princeton, NJ, 1988), p. 183.

great baron to have a man at court. The court was the seat of power and those who were closest to the king could expect to have at least some influence over political events. Ralph fitz Nicholas, for example, became steward of the household under Henry III.¹⁰⁷ His influence over what went on in the household was therefore considerable. To have a man in the royal household must have seemed like an attractive proposition to any great baron, since the baron could expect his man to speak to the king on his behalf and generally look after his interests.

There were other knights in John's household who had started their careers in the households of different lords. Gilbert of Kentwell, for example, was the eldest son of Roger of Kentwell, who held ten knights' fees in chief in Suffolk.¹⁰⁸ Gilbert had started his career in the household of Theobald Walter, John's butler of Ireland.¹⁰⁹ Theobald Walter and Gilbert's father both died in 1206, and at that point Gilbert returned to England to take up his inheritance.¹¹⁰ In 1209 he began to appear acting for the king, mostly serving as a royal diplomat, and he continued in this capacity until the end of the reign. Thomas le Bret also began his career in the household of another great lord. Thomas' first master was Gilbert Basset, sheriff of Oxfordshire between 1199 and 1201;¹¹¹ in fact, Thomas may have grown up in Gilbert Basset's household. He was enfeoffed by Basset with land in Wantage, Berkshire, and also held in Adderbury, Oxfordshire.¹¹² Thomas led Basset's contingent of knights in Normandy in 1203, an experience which probably gave him the opportunity to show his prowess and to enter the king's service.¹¹³ The household knight William de Lande joined John's royal household via service in two baronial households. William came from a Lincolnshire family who held lands in Coleby, Habrough, and Killingholme in chief from the king; Wispington from Robert of Tattershall; Ewerby from Gerard de Camville; and land in Yorkshire from Roger de Mowbray.¹¹⁴ In 1204, William was in the household of Roger de Mowbray. By Michaelmas 1205, he was acting as an under-sheriff in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in the

¹⁰⁷ For an example of Ralph fitz Nicholas authorising a grant in favour of the earl of Derby see *Close Rolls 1227-31*, pp. 194-5.

¹⁰⁸ Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁹ *Ormond Deeds*, pp. 5, 8, 9, 12-13, 18, 48; *Cockersand Chart.*, II, i, pp. 375-6; *Chartae, Privilegia et Immunitates*, p. 11; *Early Lancs. Charters*, p. 340; *Carew MSS*, misc., p. 443.

¹¹⁰ *Pipe Rolls 7 John*, p. 180; *8 John*, pp. 34-5; Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 126.

¹¹¹ D. A. Carpenter, 'The sheriffs of Oxfordshire and their subordinates, 1194-1236: a study in politics, patronage and society' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1973), pp. 76-86.

¹¹² *Book of Fees*, pp. 451, 455; *VCH Oxon.*, ix, p. 18; *Cirencester Abbey Cart.*, pp. 523-5, 527-8, 636-8; *VCH Berks.*, iv, p. 323.

¹¹³ Carpenter, 'Sheriffs of Oxon.', p. 83.

¹¹⁴ *Red Book*, p. 523; *Book of Fees*, pp. 156, 179, 188, 1060, 1097.

The Household Knights of King John

service of Robert of Tattershall. By October 1208, he was in the service of the king.¹¹⁵ The tenurial ties with both Mowbray and Tattershall undoubtedly explain why William was to be found in their services. We may also suspect that William gained access to the royal household because of his service in these baronial households.¹¹⁶

Two of John's household knights may well have gained entry to John's household through a connection to Hubert de Burgh. Hubert was in control of the barony of Hatch, Somerset, from 1202, and received formal custody of the barony and heir of Robert I de Beauchamp in April 1206. Hubert held on to the custody of the Hatch barony at least until 1211, when John Marshal was to be found answering for the barony's scutage for him.¹¹⁷ Soon after this, Robert II de Beauchamp must have come of age since Hubert no longer accounted for the barony's scutage. In 1214 Robert followed the king to Poitou and by 1215 had entered the household as a royal knight.¹¹⁸ The Beauchamp barony itself consisted of some seventeen knights' fees in Somerset and Dorset; the family of Beauchamp was clearly of major significance in these counties.¹¹⁹ The second household knight who may have owed his entry into the royal household to Hubert de Burgh was Godfrey of Crowcombe. Godfrey held the manor of Crowcombe, Somerset, from the barony of Robert de Beauchamp.¹²⁰ Possibly by 1205, but certainly by 1209 he was firmly established in the royal household and had started in what was to become one of his major roles as a royal diplomat.¹²¹ Both of these household knights had strong connections with Hubert de Burgh before they entered royal service; Robert de Beauchamp was in Hubert's custody as a minor and Godfrey held from the Beauchamp barony whilst Robert was in Hubert's custody. It seems likely, then, that both knights were introduced into the royal household by Hubert de Burgh. Two other men who were almost certainly household knights during John's reign were also

¹¹⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 13 b; *Pipe Roll 7 John*, p. 277; *Pleas Before the King or his Justices, 1198-1212*, 2 vols., ed. D. M. Stenton (Seldon Society, 83-4, 1966, 1967), ii, no. 3,519; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

¹¹⁶ William de Lande held two fees of Mowbray in Yorkshire (*Book of Fees*, p. 1,097) and half a fee from Tattershall in Wispington, Lincolnshire (*Book of Fees*, pp. 1,060, 1,242, 1,243).

¹¹⁷ *Pipe Roll 4 John*, p. 96, 231; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 62; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 433; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 36; *Pipe Rolls 10 John*, p. 110; *13 John*, pp. 228-9.

¹¹⁸ *Pipe Roll 16 John*, p. 106; Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 17.

¹¹⁹ *Red Book*, p. 545; *Book of Fees*, pp. 86, 426, 751, 754, 1,468-9; *Two Registers Formerly Belonging to the Family of Beauchamp of Hatch*, ed. H. C. Maxwell-Lyte (Somerset Record Society, 35, 1920), pp. 1-2.

¹²⁰ *Monasticon Anglicanum*, iv, p. 255; *Book of Fees*, p. 1,469; *Two Beauchamp Registers*, p. 2.

¹²¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 57, 126, 190 b; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 119, 151-2; *Pipe Roll 16 John*, p. 29; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 130; *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 633, 635.

introduced into the royal household by two of John's most powerful servants. Ralph de Normanville and Ralph of Bray were both called marshals of the king's army in 1213, positions of considerable importance within the household.¹²² Ralph de Normanville had begun his career in the household of the king's justiciar, Geoffrey fitz Peter, before moving on to royal service. Ralph of Bray had started in the household of William Brewer.¹²³

The sons and relations of important barons were also placed in John's household by their fathers. Mention has already been made of the Clifford brothers and Henry IV de la Pomeroy, but there were other knights who were related to major English barons who found their way into the royal household. For example, Henry, an illegitimate son of Earl David of Huntingdon, went to Ireland with John as a *miles de familia regis*.¹²⁴ This was the only occasion that Henry served in John's household and he was perhaps leading the earl's contingent on that campaign.¹²⁵ Stephen de Gant was a son of the Lincolnshire baron, Robert de Gant, and also spent some time in the royal household.¹²⁶ Other examples of this nature appear in the sources. William Houdri and Geoffrey de Casteler were nephews of Ranulf de Vir and were knights of King John's household;¹²⁷ Simon and Eustace de Campo Remigio were nephews of Gerard de Furneal snr.¹²⁸

The ties of neighbourhood that allowed access to the royal household are in many ways the most difficult to perceive and to prove. Nonetheless, that these ties were important in launching some men's careers in royal service is certain, and in some cases we can perceive these ties in action. In the case of the household knight Robert of Burgate, ties of neighbourhood seem to have been important in launching his career in royal service. Before 1204, Robert was a minor knight who held two knights' fees in Burgate, Suffolk.¹²⁹ By February 1205, the honour of Eye, Suffolk, whose *caput* was just 5 miles from Burgate, was in the hands of the king's half-brother, William Longsword, earl of Salisbury.¹³⁰ In the same year Robert and his squire, William Talbot,

¹²² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 164.

¹²³ Carpenter, 'Sheriffs of Oxon', pp. 125-7, 153.

¹²⁴ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 212. Earl David had three sons whom he called Henry, two of whom were illegitimate. The earl's rather unimaginative approach to naming his sons makes it difficult to distinguish between them (K. J. Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon, 1152-1219: a Study in Anglo-Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1985), pp. 81-2).

¹²⁵ Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, p. 155.

¹²⁶ Dugdale, *Baronage*, i, p. 401; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

¹²⁷ *Pipe Roll 10 John*, p. 88.

¹²⁸ *Rot. Norm.*, p. 94.

¹²⁹ *Book of Fees*, p. 916; Copinger, *County of Suffolk*, i, p. 353.

¹³⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 50 b.

pledged surety for the earl to have two casks of wine.¹³¹ In February 1208, Robert took control of Eye from the earl and was, by this time, clearly in the royal household, and probably under the earl's tutelege,¹³² for in 1210 the earl was amongst the pledges obtained by Robert for the 700 marks he proffered for his marriage to Gallena Brewer.¹³³ Robert's squire, William Talbot, may also have advanced his career through his association with the earl. William held half the vill of Hintlesham, Suffolk, and though he did not actually appear in the royal household until the reign of Henry III,¹³⁴ William was often to be found working in concert with Robert of Burgate when Robert was engaged in royal business during John's reign.¹³⁵ William was also responsible for collecting the earl's money fief during the Irish campaign in 1210, and we may suspect, therefore, that his association with the earl was strong.¹³⁶

There was one other group of men whom John took into the ranks of his *milites de familia* and who have yet to receive a proper mention in this chapter. These men were the *alieni*, men from another place, who undoubtedly did have a place in the royal household. The terms of Magna Carta make it plain how resented these men had become by 1215. There were at least twenty-four household knights who can be shown to have come from places other than England, and since we are talking of a pool of about a hundred household knights, this constitutes a significant minority. By far and away the largest group of these foreign knights came from Flanders which, incidentally, seems to have provided John with the vast bulk of his stipendiary knights.¹³⁷ It is not surprising, therefore, that some of these men would prove themselves and be retained in the royal household. John de Columpchamp, for example, first came to England in the retinue of Hugh de Boves, one of John's mercenary captains.¹³⁸ When Hugh de Boves was killed in a storm off the East Anglian coast on 26 September 1215, John was taken into royal service as a household knight.¹³⁹

¹³¹ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 229; *Pipe Roll 6 John*, p. 254.

¹³² *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 79; *Curia Regis Rolls*, v, p. 220; *Placitorum*, pp. 59 b–60; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 80 b, 82, 84 b.

¹³³ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 31.

¹³⁴ PRO, C72/2 m 20.

¹³⁵ *Book of Fees*, pp. 396, 591; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 131; *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 243; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 119 b, 120 b; *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Yorkshire in 3 Henry III (1218–19)*, ed. D. M. Stenton (Seldon Society, 56, 1937), pp. 516, 1, 135.

¹³⁶ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 181 (2), 196, 223.

¹³⁷ Church, 'A question of numbers', pp. 159–60; Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', pp. 7–8.

¹³⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 162 b.

¹³⁹ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 622–3; Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 17.

Could these men be in part responsible for the bad reputation enjoyed by John's foreigners? The answer seems to be no. Men such as Engelard de Cygogné and his brood might find their way into the text of Magna Carta as *persona non grata*, but these men do not seem to have been household knights; rather they were captains of John's *routiers*, those especially hated men in all settled societies. If we go by the rewards that the foreign household knights received, then we are forced to conclude that very few of the knights in John's household identified as *alieni* did particularly well out of royal service, when compared to those men from English knightly backgrounds. With the exception of Baldwin de Béthune, who rose to prominence under King Richard and was dead by 1212,¹⁴⁰ William des Préaux, whom John courted with wealthy confiscations during the civil war, and William de Courtenay,¹⁴¹ none of these *alieni* received from John those large and profitable wardships, custodies, and lucrative marriages which were so coveted by John's knights. In fact, the most successful of John's household *milites alieni* – Henry de Lorty, William de Gamaches, Adam de St-Martin, and Joldwin de Doe – received their greatest rewards under Henry III.¹⁴² Most interestingly of all, of these seven successful foreign knights only two, Adam de St-Martin and Baldwin de Béthune, were Flemings, four were Normans, and one, Joldwin de Doe, was a Poitevin. The conclusion must be drawn that if John's *milites alieni* were a cause of discontent it is certain that this was not as a result of the rewards which they received. But with foreigners such as Engelard de Cygogné doing so well from royal service, the large numbers of *alieni* in John's knightly establishment must have fuelled contemporary anxieties that John had far too many foreigners in his employ.

The conclusions to be drawn from this chapter are more wide-reaching than the simple ways in which John's knights gained entry to the royal household. The medieval king was at the centre of a great nexus of power. Everything revolved around the king with the household as his main executive arm. In order to increase one's power and influence in society one had to gain access to the royal circle. Access to this royal circle, at least in terms of appointment to the ranks of the *milites de familia regis*, came from personal recommendation above all else. Whether a knight came from a family with a long tradition of royal service or whether he was just starting to build his family fortunes through service in the royal household, he had to have an *entrée* which

¹⁴⁰ English, *Lords of Holderness*, p. 35.

¹⁴¹ Rot. Fin., p. 377; Rot. Litt. Pat., p. 73 b.

¹⁴² Ex. Rot. Fin., i, p. 92; Patent Rolls 1216–25, p. 435; Rot. Litt. Claus., ii, p. 33 b; Rot. Litt. Claus., i, pp. 295 b, 397 b, 398 b–399; Pipe Roll 5 Henry III, p. 73.

involved some form of personal recommendation. This recommendation had to come from a man the king already knew, either because he was in the royal service or because he was a well-known baron. This, when one thinks about it, is hardly surprising, since John's knights were the backbone of his army, his castellans, his diplomats, his bodyguards, and sometimes even his friends.¹⁴³ It would be unlikely that the king would place a man whom he did not know within his household.

What of the identities of these men, from what social background did they come? Overwhelmingly John's household knights seem to have come from the knightly families of English society. Most of these men's families held only one or two knights' fees, and although in a broad sense this put these men amongst the ranks of the privileged landed élite, in the society of the royal household it made them amongst the 'lesser of God's creatures'. There were those foreigners, who have been mentioned, and there were some representatives of the baronial families who would have considered themselves as the king's natural allies and servants, but the impression of John's knightly establishment is that it was made up of the middling sort. This would not, however, have made them ineffectual as household knights, quite the contrary as far as John was concerned. As we shall see in a later chapter, these men provided ideal servants precisely because they owed their future prosperity to their lord.¹⁴⁴

The number of John's household knights who came from the baronial level of society clearly shows that this group was certainly underrepresented. Of the eleven individuals of baronial status, moreover, only three, Stephen de Gant, Henry fitz Earl David of Huntingdon, and Nicholas de Stuteville, came from families who would later be ranked amongst the Northerners. None of these men served in John's household for long, and none of them received any significant rewards for their services. Since it is clear that those of baronial status were not particularly numerous in John's military household at any time, this underrepresentation of the Northerners amongst the ranks of John's household knights might not have mattered. But the same pattern of geographical origin may also be perceived in the men who were descended from families of knightly status. Since this chapter has shown that great magnates were keen to establish some of their own men in the royal household, this had significant consequences for the

¹⁴³ See *Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium*, ed. M. R. James, revised by C. N. L. Brooke and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1983), pp. 470–2, who described how Henry I would invite young men of worth who wanted to make a name for themselves into his own household. The implication here is that Henry, too, valued personal recommendation.

¹⁴⁴ See ch. 4.

northern magnates. Of John's household knights, very few could be considered as out and out Northerners, the area which was to produce the majority of the rebels in 1215.¹⁴⁵ Those who were clearly Northerners in origin, and had not been placed in the north by the king, were Hugh Malebisse, who was descended from a mid-twelfth-century steward of the great northern magnate Roger de Mowbray;¹⁴⁶ Robert of Ropsley, who was a Lincolnshire man and held his *caput* of Ropsley from William d'Albini of Belvoir, another great northern magnate;¹⁴⁷ William de Lande, who was also a Lincolnshire man, he held from Norman Darcy, Robert of Tattershall, and also from Roger de Mowbray in Yorkshire;¹⁴⁸ and Eustace and Simon de Campo Remigio, who were nephews of Gerard de Furneal snr, were connected to the Northerners. Although these men did considerably better from royal service than did their baronial counterparts, they were still not the most successful of John's household knights. Even Robert of Ropsley, who until 1210 was high in royal favour, was margined in the second part of the reign. When the time came for civil war at the end of the reign, moreover, everyone of these particular knights rebelled against John.¹⁴⁹ When both great financial and political gains were to be made through contact with the king, exclusion of the baronial élite and their representatives, the knights, must have caused much resentment.

There is a further important point to be made that may not immediately be obvious. With very few exceptions, the men mentioned in this chapter entered the household as fully fledged knights. They do not appear to have started their careers in the royal household as squires and sergeants. We can point to the odd example of a man who made the leap to the ranks of the *milites de familia regis*, such as Thomas Sturmy, who in July 1204 was given a robe of scarlet with a hood of doe skin, another of green or burnet, a saddle, bridle-reins, a cloak for wet weather, a mattress and a pair of linen sheets 'quem ipse fiet miles'.¹⁵⁰ Seemingly John was promoting Thomas from the rank of squire ('valettus' in the text) to that of knight; the cost of this was, however, not to come out of the household, but to be set against the farm of the sheriff of Hampshire. On this date, 17 July 1204, John went from Wells to Bristol, and since the letter instructing the sheriff was given at Bristol, D. M. Stenton suggested that the ceremony must,

¹⁴⁵ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 8–16.

¹⁴⁶ *Charters of the Honour of Mowbray, 1107–1191*, ed. D. E. Greenway (London, 1972), pp. lxii, 49–50, 290.

¹⁴⁷ *Book of Fees*, p. 184.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 1,019, 1,060, 1,242, 1,243, 1,097.

¹⁴⁹ See ch. 5.

¹⁵⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 3; *Pipe Roll 6 John*, p. 121.

therefore, have taken place at that city.¹⁵¹ But it seems to me that the language of the letter does not make it at all clear that the king had anything to do with the ceremony of dubbing. On the contrary, it is the sheriff of Hampshire who is to hand over the named items (not money to the value of, notice), not the king. In any event, it is a strange entry and one that does nothing to inspire confidence that John made a habit of promoting squires of his household to the rank of knight. Those who entered the royal household as knights did so from outside the household: in other words, they had received their training elsewhere.

This picture of a mature royal household is one that stands in stark contrast to the households of John's barons. It was in the baronial households that men received their training in the profession of arms, not, it seems, in the royal household. Even at the very top of society, noble men sent their boys to the households of their aristocratic peers or, if the king had a son of a suitable age, to the household of the heir apparent.¹⁵² The king's household was a much more sober place where men of maturity undertook the business of the realm. Later on in the middle ages, as the royal court became more sedentary, the royal household does seem to have taken on the role of 'educator of the young'.¹⁵³ But in John's reign, as the court moved around the countryside, there seems to have been no place for young men learning the profession of arms.

¹⁵¹ *Pipe Roll 6 John*, p. xxxiv.

¹⁵² N. Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: the Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy, 1066-1530* (London, 1984), pp. 28-9, 31.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-55.

MONARCHY IN ACTION: THE FUNCTIONS OF THE KING'S HOUSEHOLD KNIGHTS

The knight in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, whatever he was going to become later in the middle ages, was first and foremost a man trained in the profession of arms. He had to begin his training before the age of puberty and his apprenticeship was long and arduous. The king had need of such men, both to proclaim his dignity and to maintain his authority in a potentially violent society. The royal household knights provided the king with a permanent body of trained warriors upon whom he could draw in times of need. But once a knight had entered royal service, he was expected to become more than a simple fighting man. As J. E. A. Jolliffe long ago pointed out, the Angevin kings were demanding masters and they expected an extraordinary degree of flexibility in the men who served them.¹ The household knights, too, were expected to turn their hands to any task to which the king wished to assign them. Versatility was the key attribute required of all royal servants in the middle ages, and the household knights were no exception in this regard. These men were multi-functional servants of the king who, as we shall see in a later chapter, owed everything to their lord.²

The first function performed by the majority of John's household knights related to the business of fighting. War was, after all, the knight's special calling, and during John's eventful reign, there was enough conflict to keep even the most bellicose knight amused: the defence of the Angevin continental lands (1199–1204); two campaigns in Poitou to begin the process of regaining those lands (1205 and 1206); organised campaigns in Scotland (1209), Ireland (1210), and Wales (1211); a raid against the French king's fleet at Damme (1213); a further campaign in Poitou and one of the most significant battles of the middle ages at

¹ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, p. 212.

² See ch. 4.

The Household Knights of King John

Bouvines (1214); and, of course, the civil war (1215–17), not to mention the myriad of other sundry scuffles which in some way involved the king's men. For a king who languishes under the sobriquet 'softsword', John was involved in a great deal of fighting, and in much of it he enjoyed considerable success.

In the normal course of events, for reasons that will become clear later, most household knights did not follow the king around on a day-to-day basis. Rather, they were out on royal business or on their own estates from where they had to be recalled when the king required their services. No summonses survive for John's reign but the practice appears fully formed in the early years of Henry III's reign. A summons to household knights survives from the years 1224–5 when Henry sent his household troops into France.³ It seems reasonable to suppose that John must have followed a similar policy of recalling his household knights when he had need of them.

We know that later kings of England used their military retainers as a vital part of their forces in times of war. They allowed the king to strike quickly and effectively against his enemies without initiating the cumbersome process of raising the so-called feudal levy or relying upon men unwilling to serve for more than the irksome forty-day period of duty. R. F. Walker, for example, has shown how Edward I was able to send his household troops into Wales in the winter of 1276–7 fully six months before the arrival of the main army.⁴ It is clear from Walker's evidence that the host was summoned to serve in Wales only when it was absolutely necessary. In the normal course of events, the king relied upon his household troops, his mercenary retainers, and the troops supplied by the marcher lords.⁵ The Welsh wars were not the only ones where the royal household provided the main fighting force for Edward I's armies. In the campaign that Edward I waged in Flanders in the autumn of 1297, for example, the household provided two-thirds of the mounted element in that army.⁶ Moreover, the household knights in Edward I's campaigns were more than simply fighting men: they performed the functions of a 'headquarters staff', garrisoned the king's castles and governed the more difficult areas of Edward's dominions. Furthermore, the household knights were in charge of recruitment, transport, and escort duty. In short, they were the king's officer class

³ PRO, C72/2 m. 20. For the dating of this and other summonses of the 1220s see Critchley, 'Summonses', p. 86.

⁴ R. F. Walker, 'The Anglo-Welsh wars, 1217–67: with special reference to English military developments' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1954), p. 66.

⁵ Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 84.

⁶ Lewis, 'English forces in Flanders', p. 314.

performing all the duties one might expect of these sort of men in times of crisis.⁷ In all these ways, John's household knights were no different from those of his grandson. Edward I was doing nothing new.

It is during the 1210 campaign in Ireland that we get the clearest picture of the royal household knights at war. The Irish campaign provides us with a vast quantity of logistical material unparalleled before the reign of Edward I. The surviving *prestita* roll for that year mentions around 800 knights who went with John to Ireland. In addition to this information the roll includes the payments made for the ships which took the army from Cross-on-Sea to Crook near Waterford, payments to sergeants, crossbowmen, carpenters, ditchers, miners, and siege engineers. This enormous amount of material provides us with a unique opportunity to see how a campaign waged by John was financed and organised, and what role John's household knights played in this campaign.

The first point to make is that this was a campaign that was organised and run through the royal household. There were, of course, many men present in Ireland in 1210 who had nothing to do with the *familia regis*, but they received their pay and instructions through the king's knights and others of the royal household, and were transported to Ireland by ships that were paid for by these men out of the king's coffers.⁸ The 700 ships which John used during the campaign were paid by the household knight, Geoffrey Luttrell, and by Henry fitz Count, a royal *familiaris*, to the sum of £3,837.⁹ Another household official, Henry de Ver, took responsibility for the payment of wages to the large force of sergeants, crossbowmen, and certain stipendiary knights on the campaign, a total amounting to some £2,382.¹⁰ The *imprest*s made to the 800 or so knights who accompanied John to Ireland were administered by a body of household officials including the king's half-brother, William Longsword,¹¹ the household knights, John of Bassingbourne and Robert of Burgate,¹² the royal steward, William of Harcourt,¹³ the king's nephew and royal marshal, Ralph Gernun,¹⁴ and finally the earl of Derby.¹⁵ Overseeing virtually all of these payments was the clerk of the chamber, Richard Marsh.¹⁶ The chamber had yet to be superseded

⁷ Morris, *Welsh Wars*, p. 84.

⁸ For a full discussion of the campaign see Church, 'The 1210 campaign in Ireland', pp. 45–57.

⁹ *Rot. Lib. Joh.*, p. 252.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 172–3, 176, 179, 181, 187, 188, 191, 192, 194, 196, 202, 208–9, 210, 214.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 175, 179, 182, 185, 187, 189, 193, 195, 214.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 182, 185.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 207, 212.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 218, 224.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 177, 179, 185, 187, 189, 193, 195, 207, 210, 214, 218, 224.

by the wardrobe as the main spending department of the household.¹⁷ It is apparent that it was Richard Marsh, as clerk of the chamber and therefore the chief spending officer of the royal household, who had overall responsibility for the financing of the campaign.

Organising and paying for the campaign apart, John's household knights also took a major role in the campaign itself. John's knights operated as the core of the army and provided the professional element to strengthen the resolve of the less experienced knights. The records of payments made to these men demonstrate that they received their *imprests* together. For example, on 5 July a group of eight household knights received *imprests* together;¹⁸ on 25 July another band of thirteen household knights were paid in a group.¹⁹ Some household knights were occasionally paid a lump sum to cover the payments to themselves and a number of their colleagues. Eustace and Simon de Campo Remigio, Henry de Longchamp, and William de Gamaches received a payment in this way and it must be presumed that one of their number collected the payment for himself and his associates.²⁰ On at least one occasion sixteen household knights received payments as they operated as a coherent group under the leadership of the king's steward, William of Harcourt.²¹

Although less clear in the sources, there are other occasions when we can see John's household knights taking a central role in one of John's campaigns. In early June 1205, for example, John was encamped at Porchester waiting to embark for the continent in an attempt to begin the reclamation of the continental lands which he had finally lost the year before. According to the chronicler Ralph of Coggeshall, the English barons were unwilling to follow their king into another potentially expensive cross-channel expedition.²² John was infuriated by his barons' refusal to follow him, but was unable to persuade them to change their minds. Instead, he was forced to send a band of his household knights to the aid of his few continental supporters under the leadership of his bastard son, Geoffrey fitz Roy.²³ These men were transported to the continent by galleys requisitioned by another of John's household knights, Ralph de Trumbleville.²⁴ Another of John's illegitimate sons, Henry fitz Roy, was sent as part of the vanguard of the army which went with John to Poitou in 1214. In January that year, he and a number of companions crossed to the continent two weeks before the main body of the army embarked for Poitou.²⁵

¹⁷ Tout, *Chapters*, i, p. 169.

¹⁸ Rot. Lib. John, p. 189.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 203.

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 178, 184, 212.

²¹ Ibid., p. 212.

²² Coggeshall, p. 153.

²³ Rot. Litt. Pat., 53.

²⁴ Pipe Roll 8 John, p. 23.

²⁵ Rot. Litt. Claus., i, p. 161.

Royal household knights were also the leaders of contingents of the king's army. Their reliability and leadership qualities were clearly valued by the king. In 1199, John Russell and nineteen mounted sergeants were paid 9 pence per day for ten days whilst in the king's service.²⁶ Another of John's household knights, William de Avenel, can also be seen leading a small body of king's men. On 25 March 1204, the bailiffs of Shoreham were ordered to find a good and secure ship to take William and twenty crossbowmen across the sea in the king's service.²⁷ The date suggests that these men were sent to Normandy to help in the last days of the struggle against the French king, Philip Augustus. In October 1214, Godfrey of Crowcombe led twenty sergeants and crossbowmen to Philip Mark in the castle of Nottingham.²⁸ On 4 November 1214, Falkes de Bréauté and Godfrey of Crowcombe received £20 for the imprests which they had made to these sergeants and crossbowmen in advance of their *liberaciones*.²⁹

Household knights not only led sergeants and crossbowmen for the king, but also led parties of other knights. During the campaign in Poitou in 1214, Thomas le Bret received a letter of safe conduct for himself and the men and knights of Castelnau, county Toulouse.³⁰ In January 1215, the sheriff of Nottingham, Philip Mark, was ordered to allow Ralph de Trubleville with his men, their horses and arms into the castle of Nottingham.³¹ These were the men who had left Castle Donington after the king had ordered the return of that castle to John, constable of Chester, in the July of the previous year.³² In the May of the same year, another household knight, Walter de Verdun, led knights and crossbowmen into the castle of Bristol to help Aymeric de Sascy and Peter de Cancellarius defend it.³³ In August 1212, Walter de Baillolet went on an expedition with his men for the king, for which he was given 100 shillings by the king.³⁴ Also in 1212, Falkes de Bréauté was one of the leaders with the steward William de Cantilupe of the army that went to Wales.³⁵

As is perhaps inevitable given the nature of the documentary evidence, much of the fighting activity undertaken by John's household

²⁶ *Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 129. At the same time Peter of Hide and four of his associates were paid at 9 pence per day and Yuon and eight of his associate knights were paid at 2 shillings per day.

²⁷ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 106. This was to be done without payment by William and the amount was to be accounted for at the exchequer.

²⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 176.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

³⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 121 b.

³¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 183 b.

³² *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 119 b.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 137 b (2); cf. *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 141. Walter de Verdun was with Robert de Courtenay who, although not called as such, was probably also a household knight.

³⁴ *Docs. of English History*, p. 238; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 122.

³⁵ *Chron. Maj.* ii, p. 538.

knights is obscured. We have no Orderic Vitalis for this reign to take a lively interest in the nature of the king's military activities. But act in a fighting capacity John's knights certainly did. It is in the sphere of military logistics, however, that the *milites de familia regis* come into their own in the record evidence for John's reign.

The Irish campaign apart, John's household knights were heavily involved in the logistics of campaigning activity throughout the reign. For example, in 1212, William Cam and his associate crossbowmen of Dover were paid for their stay in the castle from 17 April 1211 to 16 June 1212 by the letters of Robert of Burgate and his squire, William Talbot, the constable of Dover.³⁶ In 1213, Burgate received 300 marks for the retention of sergeants in Norfolk, presumably as part of the coastal defence against the possible invasion of Philip Augustus.³⁷ Burgate was also responsible for acquiring victuals for the king's army whilst on campaign. In February 1207, with Peter fitz Herbert, he was responsible for ensuring that William de Wrotham and Reginald of Cornhill allowed Robert of Thornham to take corn to Flanders.³⁸

Other household knights also took part in this logistical side of campaigning activity. Henry de Turberville emerges late in John's reign as a paymaster, when he received £100 for paying imprests to the knights and sergeants who had gathered for the siege of Rochester under the king's leadership.³⁹ This is the only occasion in John's reign on which Henry operated in this way, but his abilities in the logistics of warfare would be more extensively used by Henry III. Similarly Geoffrey Luttrell was involved in the expenditure of the king, but in his case this function extended beyond simply paying knights and sergeants. In January 1206, Geoffrey was sent into Poitou with 2,500 marks, presumably to help with its defence whilst the king was preparing his invasion.⁴⁰ Whilst the campaign was in progress, he played a key role in supplying the king with campaign funds. In June 1206, Geoffrey, with master Elias, was ordered to release 2,000 marks from the treasure which was in their custody to Savari de Mauléon, a leading Poitevin adherent

³⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 119 b; cf. p. 120 b. They were paid in two instalments: £566 7s 6d up to 7 May 1212, and £53 18s 9d up to 16 June 1212.

³⁷ *Docs. of English History*, p. 259; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 133.

³⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 59 b.

³⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 262, 262 b.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61 b: 1,000 marks from the sheriff of Dorset; *ibid.*, pp. 62, 63: 1,500 marks from the sheriff of Devon, Robert of Winchester and his associate sergeants of the treasury at Exeter, and W. and R. chamberlains. They probably left for Poitou from Dartmouth where Audoeno was sent to Geoffrey on 15 January (*Docs. of English History*, p. 275). Geoffrey received payment for conducting the king's treasure from Axminster to Portsmouth sometime in 1206 (*Pipe Roll 8 John*, p. 138).

of King John.⁴¹ On 25 June, he and master Elias were ordered to liberate 1,000 marks of silver and £2,688 10 shillings Angevin for gifts and payments to knights and sergeants as well as payments for fifty ships and galleys.⁴² Geoffrey and master Elias also made smaller payments on this campaign, for example, the 60 marks to Pontio de Mirabeau on 16 June 1206,⁴³ and the seventeen robes of 'Stanford' with lamb's-wool hoods but without any silk on them which they were ordered to find for Imbert le Lorn on 25 June.⁴⁴ Geoffrey Luttrell's connection with the logistical problems of campaigning continued after the ill-fated adventure of 1206. In January 1207, he took 1,000 marks into Poitou.⁴⁵ In 1210, Geoffrey, with Henry fitz Count, was largely responsible for paying the sailors and ships which transported the army to and from Ireland.⁴⁶ In the exchequer term of 1211, Geoffrey was allowed 60 shillings which he had paid for the carriage of stores to Ireland,⁴⁷ where he seems to have remained on the king's business until the summer of 1215.⁴⁸ Geoffrey's importance to John was, as we have seen, more than that of just a fighting knight. He was clearly highly valued by the king for his administrative ability and, given the large sums of money with which he was given charge, also his honesty and loyalty. These qualities were used by John in other, non-specifically martial, spheres, as will become evident later.

It is clear then that John's household knights were involved in many aspects of royal campaigning activity. But the most important point is that John's knights were not used simply as soldiers. These men were involved in almost every aspect of royal warfare, from leading men in battle to organising and paying the men mustered for the army.

The control of strategically important castles and areas provides

⁴¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 66; H. J. Chaytor, *Savaric de Mauléon: Baron and Troubadour* (Cambridge, 1939), pp. 15–36.

⁴² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 73.

⁴³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 66.

⁴⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 73.

⁴⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 59; with Peter Ordardi and brothers Paulinus and Falkes.

⁴⁶ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 176 (2), a total of £80; *ibid.*, p. 179, 500 marks; *ibid.*, p. 185, £1,000; *ibid.*, p. 188, 10 marks; *ibid.*, p. 194, 250 marks; *ibid.*, p. 202, 200 marks; *ibid.*, p. 206, 100 marks; *ibid.*, p. 208 (2), 60 shillings and £17 paid by Geoffrey alone; *ibid.*, pp. 213–14, 40 shillings; *ibid.*, pp. 227 (3) and 228, with Master Ernald and the clerk Matthew de Cigogné a total of £1,100; *ibid.*, p. 229, with Henry fitz Count £60; cf. *ibid.*, p. 252, where the total paid by Geoffrey and Henry is given as £2,500 less 39s 4d.

⁴⁷ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 89.

⁴⁸ *Docs. of English History*, p. 233; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 137, 146, 188 b, 191; Geoffrey had probably returned by 6 July 1215 (*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 147 b–148; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 556) and had certainly returned by 4 August when Philip Mark was ordered to receive him into the castle of Nottingham (*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 152).

further material for the assessment of the importance of John's household knights to his rule. But this particular aspect of their activity brings into view the problems associated with drawing the artificial division between martial and non-martial functions. Castles were not just military centres: they also played an important role in both national and local administration. Castles could be used as treasuries, as prisons, and as royal residences.⁴⁹ But as the following discussion will show, John's household knights tended to be placed by the king in castles that were of particular strategic importance. This was especially true when he was feeling vulnerable from either internal or external enemies.⁵⁰ For example, the south coast castles of Dover, Hastings, and Corfe were all held by household knights during the reign. Dover castle was held by two of John's household knights. Robert of Burgate was custodian of Dover castle from at least 1211 until 1213,⁵¹ though it seems that his squire, William Talbot, was *de facto* castellan.⁵² The castle then went to William Brewer, one of John's closest of companions,⁵³ before going to another household knight, Gilbert of Kentwell.⁵⁴ Gilbert was established at Dover castle by 23 September 1215.⁵⁵ On 9 October 1215, he was ordered to take two barrels of money from the treasure and give 2,000 marks from them to Geoffrey of the Chapel and Raymond Beaumont. Further orders from the king to release money were sent to Gilbert on 19 and 25 October 1215.⁵⁶ Presumably Gilbert gave up the castle to the custody of Hubert de Burgh shortly after this date, since Hubert controlled Dover during Louis's siege in 1216–17.⁵⁷ But by April 1217, Gilbert was once again to be found in Dover castle.⁵⁸ Dover castle was, in the words of Hubert de Burgh as reported by Matthew

⁴⁹ R. Allen Brown, H. M. Colvin, and A. J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works: the Middle Ages*, 2 vols., general ed. H. M. Colvin (London, 1963), i, p. 67.

⁵⁰ At least fifteen of John's household knights took a hand in the control of royal castles in particularly difficult areas. This figure does not include those castles of the bishops which were briefly confiscated during the interdict. It is not always possible, and perhaps also not desirable, to include these castles in this total. After all, most bishoprics did not remain in royal hands for too long; in any event, with the exception of individual castles such as Rochester, the castles appurtenant to these bishoprics were not usually of particular strategic value.

⁵¹ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 243; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 119 b, 120 b.

⁵² *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 131, where William was called Robert's 'vadletus'.

⁵³ Ralph V. Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust: Administrative Service and Upward Mobility in Angevin England* (Philadelphia, PA, 1988), pp. 71–90.

⁵⁴ R. Allen Brown, 'The place of English castles in the administrative and military organization, 1154–1216' (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1953), p. 268.

⁵⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 229, 230 b.

⁵⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 157; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 233; R. Allen Brown, 'The place of English castles', p. 213, where he identifies Dover as a castle treasury in 1212–13.

⁵⁷ R. Allen Brown *et al.*, *King's Works*, p. 633.

⁵⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 306 b.

Paris, 'Clavis . . . Angliae',⁵⁹ but, more importantly here, the person who held custody of this castle traditionally had control over all the Cinque ports.⁶⁰ Thus, at a stroke, the most important ports in the land, 'the gates that open and shut to the perill or safety of this kingdome',⁶¹ were under the control of John's household knights at this crucial moment.

Godfrey of Crowcombe was similarly employed by John to be a custodian of a strategically important coastal castle during the civil war. On 9 September 1215, Godfrey was ordered to take custody of the castle of Hastings, the vills of Winchelsea and Rye, and the surrounding countryside.⁶² This meant that three of the Cinque ports were under Godfrey's immediate command. On 18 September, Falkes de Bréauté was ordered to send to Godfrey twenty-five sergeants with hauberks to stay in the castle of Hastings and a further twenty-five sergeants to stay in Rye.⁶³ It seems that Godfrey was responsible for the protection of these areas for the rest of the reign.⁶⁴

The castle of Corfe was also under the command of royal household knights. This castle was one of John's favourites. It was his eighth most visited castle, and it was also one of his provincial treasuries;⁶⁵ he lavished over £1,400 on building works there, an amount second only to that spent on Scarborough.⁶⁶ Between July 1207 and August 1212, the castle was held by John of Bassingbourne, one of the king's most senior household knights.⁶⁷ In August 1212, John was moved to Hertford castle,⁶⁸ and Corfe was transferred to the keepership of William of Harcourt, a royal steward. Harcourt retained Corfe until he became sheriff of Yorkshire in August 1215.⁶⁹

A similar picture of John using household knights as castle comman-

⁵⁹ *Chron. Maj.*, iii, p. 28.

⁶⁰ *Documents of the Baronial Movement of Reform and Rebellion, 1258-67*, selected by R. F. Treharne, ed. I. J. Sanders (Oxford, 1973), pp. 266-7 ('Further, he forbade the barons of the Cinque ports to obey in any matter lord Richard de Grey, keeper of Dover castle . . . although they had always, by custom, obeyed the keeper of this castle').

⁶¹ Quoted by A. L. Poole, *From Domesday Book to Magna Carta* (Oxford, 2nd edn, 1955), p. 433.

⁶² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 228.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 228 b.

⁶⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 158; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 237, 257 b, 274 b.

⁶⁵ R. Allen Brown, 'The place of English castles', pp. 206, 210; which he visited twenty-one times staying a total of sixty days; J. E. A. Jolliffe, 'The chamber and the castle treasures under King John', in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F. M. Powicke*, ed. R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin, and R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), pp. 117-42, at p. 121; R. Allen Brown, 'The treasury of the later twelfth century', in his *Castles, Conquest and Charters*, pp. 35-49.

⁶⁶ R. Allen Brown, 'Royal castle-building in England, 1154-1216', in his *Castles, Conquest and Charters*, pp. 60, 62.

⁶⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 74.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 94 b, 95; *Pipe Rolls 16 John*, p. 6; 2 *Henry III*, p. 71.

⁶⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 139, 157; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 152 b.

ders in other vital areas may also be perceived. The household knight Brian de Lisle was amongst the most influential of John's servants in the north. Soon after 1205, Brian was given custody of the Stuteville honour and, shortly afterwards, he received the chief castles of this honour, Knaresborough and Boroughbridge. Brian retained control of these castles throughout John's reign and was instrumental in turning Knaresborough into a key administrative centre in the north, both militarily and financially.⁷⁰ Brian also managed to obtain custody of the castles of the Peak and of Bolsover, both of which he was reluctant to give up. This was especially so with Peak castle, which was the subject of a long and bitter feud between Brian and the earl of Derby.⁷¹ All four of these castles were strategically important to John. The Peak and Bolsover in Derbyshire controlled the main routes north from Derby and Nottingham respectively.⁷² Knaresborough and Boroughbridge in North Yorkshire were placed squarely on the great north road within 7 miles of each other.⁷³

Two other castles located in sensitive areas were entrusted to John's household knights. Between 1209 and 1214, when it was granted to the count of Eu, John of Bassingbourne controlled the honour and castle of Tickhill, Yorkshire. Like those castles controlled by Brian de Lisle in Derbyshire and Yorkshire, Tickhill's geographical position gave it control over a vital area and one of the main routes north.⁷⁴ The castle of Kenilworth was also entrusted to a royal knight. Robert of Ropsley held the castle from sometime before July 1207 until sometime in 1210. This castle controlled one of the main routes into Coventry and was also an important administrative centre in Warwickshire, having its own chamber and wardrobe.⁷⁵ It was also, in the words of Allen Brown, 'one of the strongest and most important castles in the midlands in the late twelfth century', which John made into 'one of the strongest castles in his kingdom'.⁷⁶ Other royal castles also came under the control of John's household knights. Robert of Ropsley was constable of Bristol castle from at least August 1204 until he relinquished this position to Gerard de Athies in March 1208.⁷⁷ The castle of Carrickfergus in Ireland was controlled by Geoffrey de Serland from June 1212 until

⁷⁰ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 221–2.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 140; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 284–5.

⁷² Now the A6 and the A60. ⁷³ Now the A1.

⁷⁴ *Rot. Lib. John*. p. 116; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 116, 120.

⁷⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 74, 75 b; *Pipe Roll 13 John*, pp. 190–1.

⁷⁶ R. Allen Brown, 'A note on Kenilworth castle: the change to royal ownership', in his *Castles, Conquest and Charters*, p. 212.

⁷⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, 1, pp. 6 b–7, 10, 41 b, 57, 105, 105 b; *Pipe Rolls 7 John*, pp. 101–3; 8 *John*, pp. 16–17, 20; 9 *John*, pp. 216–17; 10 *John*, pp. 20–1; *Accounts of Bristol Castle*, p. 79.

March 1213, when he handed it over to his brother, William de Serland.⁷⁸

As has been seen, the evidence for the use by John of his household knights as castle commanders increases towards the end of the reign. This is perhaps not unexpected if we remember the circumstances under which John ruled, particularly from 1212 until his death. Not surprisingly, therefore, the evidence for John's knights pertaining to their role as castle commanders increases during the civil war. In May 1215, for example, Walter de Verdun was given the custody of the marcher castle of Bridgnorth, Shropshire.⁷⁹ Later that same month Walter was sent with the knights and crossbowmen under his control into the castle of Bristol.⁸⁰ Similarly Oxford castle was under the control of another of John's knights at this time. Although Oxfordshire was nominally under the authority of Falkes de Bréauté, Oxford castle itself was entrusted to Robert de Beauchamp. Robert appears to have controlled the castle from April until September 1216, when it was handed over to William de Bréauté, Falkes' brother and a royal squire.⁸¹ During Falkes' tenure of Bedfordshire, the royal knight Henry de Lorty was made constable of Bedford castle. Henry occupied Bedford between March and September 1216.⁸² Hereford castle was controlled by Walter of Clifford jnr from August 1215 to August 1216, and it was under Walter that the castle was reinforced against the expected invasion of Llywelyn ap Iowerth.⁸³ Exeter castle was controlled by Henry IV de la Pomeroy during the civil war.⁸⁴ Devizes castle was in the hands of Oliver de Buteville in the last months of John's life.⁸⁵ By the end of December 1215, Geoffrey de Serland had been placed in charge of John's newly constructed castle at Sauvey, Leicestershire.⁸⁶ Finally, a number of captured or confiscated baronial castles were placed under the control of John's household knights. Framlingham castle, for example, was placed in the hands of three of John's knights, Robert of Burgate, Engelram de Furnet, and Gilbert de Sanes, after it had been captured from Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, on 12 March 1216. Later that same month, Robert was ordered to return to the king's side, while

⁷⁸ *Docs. of English History*, pp. 233, 234 (2), 257, 265.

⁷⁹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 136 b, 147.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 137 b (2).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 178 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 265, 277, 287; Carpenter, 'Sheriffs of Oxon.', pp. 140–1.

⁸² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 250 b, 288.

⁸³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 153, 193 b; R. Allen Brown *et al.*, *King's Works*, ii, p. 674.

⁸⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 199 b–200; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, 137; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 135 b–136.

⁸⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 275 b.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 244 b, 258, 259, 277; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 167, 168, 173 b.

Engelram and Gilbert were to remain in the castle with the new constable, Elias de Beauchamp.⁸⁷ The important Albini castle of Belvoir was placed under the control of the royal household knight Oliver de Buteville after its capture in December 1215.⁸⁸

As Allen Brown has pointed out, the most important concern for a king when he decided whom he would place as guardian of a royal castle was to find someone who would be loyal and subservient.⁸⁹ From the king's point of view, household knights were the ideal candidates for such important appointments. The knight who owed everything to the largesse of his master would provide a dependable custodian much preferable to an independent-minded magnate. The most interesting point to emerge from this material is the central importance of all these castles to the maintenance of John's rule. Of all the castles which John's knights held, only the new castle at Sauvey in Leicestershire, which seems to have been fairly small and served mainly as a hunting lodge, could lay claim to have been relatively unimportant.⁹⁰ Allen Brown has argued that royal expenditure on castle building is a good indicator of the importance which the king placed on each particular castle.⁹¹ Of the six castles on which John spent over £1,000 – Corfe, Dover, Kenilworth, Knaresborough, Odiham, and Scarborough – all were held by royal household knights at various crisis points during the reign.⁹² It is clear, then, that during times of political instability or external threat, John used his household knights to control the most important of his castles. This is not to say that all royal castellans were household knights, nor that all household knights were royal castellans. But as we have seen, a significant number of household knights controlled the most important of the king's castles. It is clear that John's household knights played a central role in almost all of the military aspects of royal governance. They fought in, oversaw payments to, and organised the army, and controlled areas of vital interest to the king. In short the role of the royal household knight during times of campaigning activity was considerably more varied than the simple act of fighting.

⁸⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 172; R. Allen Brown, 'Framlingham castle and Bigod, 1154–1216', in his *Castles, Conquest and Charters*, pp. 201–6.

⁸⁸ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 639.

⁸⁹ R. Allen Brown, 'The place of English castles', p. 273.

⁹⁰ R. Allen Brown *et al.*, *King's Works*, ii, p. 829.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 65–9.

⁹² R. Allen Brown, 'Royal castle-building in England, 1154–1216', pp. 60–4. Odiham was built from scratch by John to serve as a hunting lodge and stopover point between Windsor and Winchester and so was not in the same strategic category as the other five. Between 1203 and 1214, however, the castle was controlled by John fitz Hugh, whose claim to be a possible household knight has already been mentioned (*Interdict Documents*, p. 12).

During times of peace, few though they were, John's household knights continued to play an important role in running the kingdom. One of the most important and, as far as the knights were concerned, lucrative functions that John's household knights performed was to farm land escheated to the crown. The main duties of the king's escheators included the collection of revenues from these lands for payment into the king's coffers and the control of any castles that were attached to the escheated lands. Some of these escheats comprised quite minor pieces of land, but others were large holdings that drew a considerable revenue which could be used to make private profit by those men placed in charge of them. This was especially true with the ecclesiastical lands which came into John's hands during the interdict. Equally the large lay honours which came into royal hands during the reign, such as the honour of Leicester, which was held by Robert of Ropsley for part of the reign, were open to abuse by their holders.⁹³ Trustworthy men were clearly a must if the potential for abuse was to be limited.

Many of the lands that were appurtenant to English bishoprics which came into the king's hand during the years of the interdict were given over to the care of household knights.⁹⁴ The bishoprics that fell into John's hands during this period were those which were vacant, those whose bishops had left England for the continent, or those whose bishops had been elected but not yet confirmed.⁹⁵ Of the eighteen bishoprics in existence in England at this time, eleven of them found their way into the hands of household knights at one time or another. Robert of Burgate, for example, held the lands of no fewer than three bishoprics. In 1208, he briefly held the lands of the bishopric of Norwich until he was ordered to turn over the bishop's regalia to John de Gray.⁹⁶ He briefly held York during Brian de Lisle's estrangement from King John. On 28 August 1212, Robert received the custody of the lands of the archbishopric of Canterbury from John fitz Hugh, who, between 1211 and 1212, had been in charge of the Canterbury estates.⁹⁷ Another of John's favoured household knights, Robert Peverel, held the lands of two bishoprics during the interdict. On 4 June 1212, Robert and Henry, archdeacon of Stafford, were given the custody of the lands of the bishopric of Exeter,⁹⁸ which they held until 1214.⁹⁹ For five months in

⁹³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 55 b.

⁹⁴ For the church in England during the interdict, see C. R. Cheney, 'King John's reaction to the Interdict in England', *TRHS*, 4th series, 31 (1948), pp. 129–50 and now C. Harper-Bill, 'John and the Church of Rome' in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge, 1999).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142. ⁹⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 81; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 109.

⁹⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 94 b; *Interdict Documents*, p. 13.

⁹⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 93; *Pipe Roll 14 John*, pp. 7–8.

⁹⁹ *Pipe Roll 16 John*, p. 83.

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1215, Robert was custodian of the estates of the bishopric of Norwich with the clerk Alured de Passet.¹⁰⁰ The occasion for this commission can probably be found in the death of the bishop, John de Gray, in the October of the previous year. John's successor, the papal legate Pandulf Masca, did not receive the temporalities of his see until 9 August 1215. Robert's brother, Thomas Peverel, was also given the custody of a bishopric's lands during the interdict. In the exchequer term for 1211, Thomas accounted for the fees in the bishopric of Bath for the scutage of Wales.¹⁰¹ Thomas also made regular payments from the revenues of the bishopric until it was returned to the custody of the church in 1213.¹⁰² Brian de Lisle had custody of the lands of the archbishopric of York;¹⁰³ he was also custodian of the lands of the bishopric of Lincoln in 1212.¹⁰⁴

Other household knights were also given the custody of ecclesiastical lands, not only those of the English bishoprics, but also those of abbeys and priories. As well as administering the lands of the archbishopric of Canterbury from 1211 to 1212, for example, John fitz Hugh held the estates of the bishopric of Salisbury between 1210 and 1212, the abbeys of Chertsey in 1208, and Eynsham and Abbotsbury between 1209 and 1212.¹⁰⁵ Thomas Sturmy was briefly given the custody of the bishopric of Chichester in March 1208,¹⁰⁶ until the vacancy was filled in 1209.¹⁰⁷ In the brief flurry of activity after the interdict was proclaimed, Thomas was also given temporary custody of the abbey of Hide, near Winchester,¹⁰⁸ and the Breosa family priories of Sele and Rusper, Sussex. The Breosa priories were, however, quickly restored to William de Breosa.¹⁰⁹ Geoffrey de Serland was also used by John as a custodian of ecclesiastical lands. He held the bishopric of Winchester briefly in 1208,¹¹⁰ and also the abbey of Wherwell, Hampshire.¹¹¹

Household knights were used as custodians of escheated lands of lay magnates and again this would often involve the knights in the control of a castle. Usually the same men who held bishoprics in custody during

¹⁰⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 132 b, 155; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 221.

¹⁰¹ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 229.

¹⁰² *Book of Fees*, p. 82; *Pipe Rolls 14 John*, p. 8; 16 *John*, p. 82; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 135 b, 147 b, 128 b.

¹⁰³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 88 b, 89; *Pipe Rolls 14 John*, pp. 2-3, 4, 68-9; 17 *John*, pp. 121-3; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 138 b, 248 b.

¹⁰⁴ *Book of Fees*, pp. 104, 197; Holt, *Northerners*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁵ *Interdict Documents*, pp. 6, 13.

¹⁰⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 80 b.

¹⁰⁷ Cheney, 'King John's reaction to the Interdict in England', p. 140.

¹⁰⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 111.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 114.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, i, p. 108 b.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 110 b.

the interdict were also involved in holding the lands of lay magnates; for example, Robert of Burgate, Brian de Lisle, Thomas and Robert Peverel were all used by John as custodians of both ecclesiastical and lay escheats. These were John's tried and tested servants and he returned to them time and time again to hold these escheated lands. Robert Peverel was used by John to hold lands escheated to the crown more than any other household knight. Between 1210 and 1213, Robert held the demesne manors of Fremlingham and Nymet Tracey with half of the Tracey honour of Barnstaple, Devon, valued at thirty fees.¹¹² In September 1206, Robert was holding the lands of Osbert fitz Hervey and Henry de Ver.¹¹³ By March 1207, Robert was holding the honour of the count of Perche in Kent.¹¹⁴ Also by 1207, Robert was answering for the revenue from the lands of Robert Poyntel, a man of the count of Perche.¹¹⁵ On 28 January 1209, Robert received the custody of the land of Roger de Toeny in Saham, Norfolk,¹¹⁶ which he held until November 1213.¹¹⁷ In 1210, he answered at the exchequer for the honour of Ongar, Essex.¹¹⁸ Robert continued to account for Ongar until 1214, when it was handed over to Richard Rivers, who had come to an agreement with the king for his marriage to Matilda de Lucy.¹¹⁹ In 1212, Robert also held the custody of the lands of Bartholomew Turet and Drogo de Vernun in Cornwall.¹²⁰ During the period before the civil war Robert Peverel held no fewer than nine lay custodies, sometimes concurrently. Clearly his skills as a reliable and trustworthy administrator were much valued by John. Brian de Lisle's custodies easily equalled those of Robert Peverel's in size and importance, if not in quantity. Brian was made joint custodian of the lands of William de Stuteville in 1205, the most important parts of which, Knaresborough and Boroughbridge, he held onto throughout the reign.¹²¹ In addition to this custody, he was also given control of the honour of Peverel in 1208–9 and later was made custodian of the ports of Lincolnshire and

¹¹² *Book of Fees*, p. 99; Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 104.

¹¹³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 74, 93; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 38.

¹¹⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 80 b; *Pipe Roll 9 John*, pp. 101, 112–13; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 38.

¹¹⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 93; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 38.

¹¹⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 89, which Robert accounted for on *Pipe Rolls 11 John*, pp. 39, 40; *12 John*, pp. 42, 43; *13 John*, p. 13; *14 John*, p. 170; *16 John*, pp. 168, 169.

¹¹⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 154 b; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 520.

¹¹⁸ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, pp. 206–7, 205. Robert was probably represented on the honour by Thomas de Rodes (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 145).

¹¹⁹ *Pipe Rolls 13 John*, pp. 130–1; *14 John*, pp. 6–7; *Docs. of English History*, p. 241; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 159 b; *VCH Essex*, iv, p. 160; *Rot. Fin.*, pp. 517–18.

¹²⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 120 b, 124 b.

¹²¹ Holt, *Northmers*, p. 221.

Yorkshire.¹²² In 1212, he was listed as the keeper of the Buckinghamshire lands of the honour of Leicester, and in addition to which held the barony of Ralph Tessun in Nottinghamshire.¹²³ In August 1205, Robert of Ropsley, with the archdeacon of Staffordshire, seems to have been custodian of the honour of Leicester.¹²⁴ In April 1206, Robert was given allowance at his account for, amongst other things, revenues from the honour which he had paid into the king's chamber.¹²⁵ He was commissioned with the custody of Simon de Montfort's share of the Leicester honour on 13 February 1207 and he paid the revenues of the honour into the king's chamber throughout that year.¹²⁶ Custody of the honour seems to have remained in Robert's hands until sometime in 1209 when it was handed over to William de Tureville and Brian de Lisle.¹²⁷

Another household knight whom John used as custodian of his escheats was Robert of Burgate. On 10 March 1207, Robert was given custody of the lands of Roger de Cressy and Isabella his wife and William fitz Roscelin in Norfolk and Suffolk, Buckinghamshire and Kent.¹²⁸ He held these lands only very briefly.¹²⁹ However, the combined revenue of Cressy and fitz Roscelin's lands did bring in 300 marks of silver for the king.¹³⁰ In February 1209, Robert was also entrusted briefly with the honour of Eye, Suffolk, until it was given to Godfrey de Louvain, the brother of the Duke of Louvain who had been the previous holder.¹³¹ On 1 March 1209, Robert was given the custody of the bailiwick and honour of Knaresborough and with it the castle.¹³² This grant was as a result of the brief but sudden and unexplained removal of all of Brian de Lisle's offices. These offices were, however, quickly returned to their erstwhile holder.¹³³ Other household knights can also be found in charge of the king's escheats. John of Bassingbourne, for example, held the honour of Tickhill,¹³⁴ and the land of Hugh de Lisures with control of the castle of Benefield, Northamptonshire.¹³⁵ Ralph de Trumbleville was made custodian of the

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 222. ¹²³ *Book of Fees*, pp. 20, 32, 33, 149, 151, 153, 229, 230.

¹²⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 47 b, 48 b; 49 b, 55 b. ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68 b.

¹²⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 68 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 83 b, 86 b, 99.

¹²⁷ *Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 92; *Book of Fees*, p. 20. ¹²⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 84 b.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 80 b; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 398. ¹³⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 82.

¹³¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 79, 81. ¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 89 (3).

¹³³ Holt, *Northerners*, p. 227.

¹³⁴ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 116; *Pipe Rolls 11 John*, p. 113 (2); *12 John*, pp. 128, 129 (2); *13 John*, p. 212; *16 John*, p. 162; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 144; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 116, 120.

¹³⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 97 b–8; R. Allen Brown, 'A list of castles, 1154–1216', in his *Castles, Conquest and Charters*, p. 103, no. 21. According to Brown's list, Benefield remained in baronial hands throughout this period and so must have been only briefly in royal hands (see his introductory remarks).

lands of Baldwin Wac in Lincolnshire and John de Humet in Sheringham, Norfolk.¹³⁶

When discussing the role of the Angevin royal *familiares*, both lay and clerical, Jolliffe saw what he thought was 'something like a profession of custody'.¹³⁷ There is little doubt that many of John's household knights pursued this aspect of their careers actively. The same household knights appear throughout John's reign in their capacity as custodians of the king's escheats. Apparently once a particular knight had proved himself to be a trustworthy and competent servant, the king would then return to him time and time again to hold escheated lands. No doubt this was a lucrative business for the household knights, as the reports made during the minority of Henry III show on the profits made by Brian de Lisle out of his custodies during John's reign.¹³⁸

It is perhaps important to note at this point that, in many cases, the revenues from these escheated lands were paid directly into the king's chamber, and not into the exchequer. The king led a peripatetic life and could not always rely upon the exchequer carts finding him when he needed ready cash. Neither was it always safe to carry large sums about the countryside; even the king's baggage train might be ambushed by bandits.¹³⁹ To some extent the system of storing cash in the castle treasuries mitigated against the likelihood of the king running out of money at a crucial moment. But despite the best laid plans, the king still sometimes ran out of money. For example, in January 1206, Reginald of Cornhill was told to find 400 marks for the king's expenses, 'quia non habemus quid pacemus pro expensis nostris in itinere nostro'.¹⁴⁰ The practice of anticipating revenue by bypassing the exchequer gave the king another method of obtaining ready cash.¹⁴¹ The normal procedure was for the knight to pay the amount into the chamber and for a letter to be sent to the barons of the exchequer to inform them that the person concerned was to be allowed that amount on his account. Not all of these payments, however, are noted in the pipe rolls.¹⁴² This should warn against the possibility of assuming that because there is no evidence of revenues paid into the exchequer, that money was not received in some other way by the royal administration. This warning is especially relevant for the middle years of John's reign, for which close

¹³⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 69 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 85; *Pipe Roll 9 John*, pp. 13, 165.

¹³⁷ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, p. 284.

¹³⁸ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 229–30.

¹³⁹ *Docs. Baronial Reform and Rebellion*, pp. 230–1.

¹⁴⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 61 b.

¹⁴¹ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, p. 232.

¹⁴² S. K. Mitchell, *Studies in Taxation under John and Henry III* (New Haven, CT, 1914), p. 106 and note.

rolls have not survived. Robert of Burgate, for example, paid revenue directly into the chamber, thus bypassing the exchequer. On 22 April 1207 the exchequer barons were ordered to allow Robert 300 marks at his account for the revenue from the lands of William fitz Roscelin and Roger de Cressy.¹⁴³ This order seems not to have been recorded in the pipe rolls for that year. Equally the proceeds from the lands of the earldom of Leicester paid into the chamber by Robert of Ropsley were not recorded in the pipe rolls.¹⁴⁴ Some amounts from the king's escheats were paid directly into the exchequer, presumably because the king was not in immediate need of the cash. In the Michaelmas Term of 1209, Robert Peverel paid into the exchequer the returns from Robert de Toeny's land at Saham, Norfolk.¹⁴⁵ Robert also paid into the exchequer the money from the honour of Ongar, Essex,¹⁴⁶ and for part of the revenues of the bishopric of Exeter.¹⁴⁷ Robert's brother, Thomas Peverel, also paid some of the revenues of the bishopric of Bath into the exchequer.¹⁴⁸

It was Jolliffe who first pointed to the importance of the *familiares* of the Angevin kings in royal government in the localities. By giving the clerks and knights of his household sheriffdoms, the custody of royal castles and escheats, and by employing them as itinerant justices, he argued, Henry II was able to make his presence felt throughout his domain. Government in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was essentially local, and it was by plugging his men into the local community that the king could extend his influence even to the lowliest subject in his kingdom.¹⁴⁹ Holt, too, pointed to the importance of the 'king's friends' in the administration of the north of England, and he convincingly described the use to which John put his *familiares* in this region and the resultant resentment that this caused amongst the northern barons.¹⁵⁰

The most important individuals in the shire were the local earl, the sheriff, and the bishop, and these men would have dominated local society. Some of these individuals were occasionally household knights.

¹⁴³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 82.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 68 b, 83 b, 86 b, 99.

¹⁴⁵ *Pipe Rolls* 11 *John*, pp. 39, 40; 12 *John*, pp. 42, 43; 13 *John*, p. 13; 14 *John*, p. 170; 16 *John*, pp. 168, 169.

¹⁴⁶ *Pipe Rolls* 12 *John*, pp. 206–7, 205; 13 *John*, pp. 130–1; 14 *John*, pp. 6–7.

¹⁴⁷ *Pipe Rolls* 14 *John*, pp. 7–8; 16 *John*, p. 83.

¹⁴⁸ *Pipe Rolls* 13 *John*, p. 229; 14 *John*, p. 8; 16 *John*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁹ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, p. 63.

¹⁵⁰ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 194–216; see also D. A. Carpenter, 'The decline of the curial sheriff in England, 1194–1258', *EHR*, 91 (1976), pp. 1–32.

Robert of Ropsley, for example, was sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire between 1207 and 1209.¹⁵¹ Geoffrey Luttrell was sheriff of Dublin between 1212 and 1215.¹⁵² Henry IV de la Pomeroy was sheriff of Devonshire in 1215.¹⁵³ Walter de Clifford jnr was sheriff of Herefordshire between August 1215 and August 1216.¹⁵⁴ But with the exception of Geoffrey Luttrell, who seems to have had no particular connection with Ireland before he became sheriff of Dublin, all these men were of considerable standing in the counties in which they held the office of sheriff. Henry IV de la Pomeroy came from a wealthy Devonshire family; Walter de Cliffords jnr likewise came from a powerful Herefordshire dynasty; and Robert of Ropsley's control of the Leicester earldom from 1205 to 1209 must have given him considerable influence in this region. These may well have been the days of the powerful curial sheriff appointed by the king with little regard to the sensibilities of the county community, but the household knights whom John appointed to sheriffdoms seem in the main to have been placed in counties where their power and prestige were already assured. The appointment as sheriff added yet further weight to the knights' local standing.

It is in the setting of the local community that the king's household knights were extremely effective on behalf of their lord and patron. It was they who could bridge the gap between court and countryside by appearing in the locality as someone with an intimate relationship with the king. For example, in February 1215, just as the crisis between John and his barons was gathering momentum, the household knights Henry IV de la Pomeroy and Henry fitz Count were sent into Cornwall to explain John's case against the rebels.¹⁵⁵ Henry IV de la Pomeroy was later to become sheriff of Devon and constable of Exeter castle, but at the point he was sent into Cornwall he held no position of authority in either county. John was simply relying on both Henrys' personal standing in the region to make their voices carry weight. At the same time as the two Henrys were in Cornwall, William de Cantilupe, one of the king's household stewards, was in Worcestershire to put John's case to the county community.¹⁵⁶ Here, too, it was William's status within Worcestershire which led John to choose him for this task: he was, of course, sheriff of the county at this point in time. From an earlier point in the reign, in May 1212, Brian de Lisle was sent to Nottingham to

¹⁵¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 74.

¹⁵² *Register of St Thomas*, p. 17; *St Mary's Cartularies, Dublin*, pp. 248–9; 'Irish pipe roll', pp. 7–13.

¹⁵³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 199 b–200; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 135 b–136.

¹⁵⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 153, 193 b.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 128 b. ¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 128 b.

speak to 'all earls, barons, and knights who were summoned to Nottingham'. In the letter patent addressed to these assembled subjects, John urged them to 'believe what [Brian] was to say on our behalf'.¹⁵⁷ Brian, too, had a long connection with Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, being chief forester there under Hugh de Neville since 1207.¹⁵⁸

There were other ways in which household knights represented the king in the localities. Early in 1215, for example, John wrote to a number of his trusted servants seeking the names of those in the counties who had declared themselves against the king. Walter of Clifford jnr, at that time sheriff of Herefordshire, custodian of the county town's castle, and custodian of the temporalities of the see of Hereford,¹⁵⁹ responded with a report on the situation in his county and the names of those who remained in opposition to King John.¹⁶⁰ Geoffrey de Serland, at the time constable of Sauvay castle, Leicestershire,¹⁶¹ sent his report to John on those in revolt in Rutland and Leicestershire. His response seems to have been much fuller than the one furnished by Walter of Clifford jnr, because it included the names of knights and sergeants who were in rebellion.¹⁶² Evidently in this case John chose not to write to the sheriff of the county concerned for his intelligence report, preferring instead to rely on the testimony of a trusted household knight.

The best evidence we have for John's use of his household knights to report on the local situation and to shore up support in the localities occurs, not surprisingly, during the civil war. But that should not lead us to believe that it was unusual for the king to expect that his household knights would represent his interests in the county communities of England. Indeed, the chance survival in the *Curia Regis Rolls* of an account of a trial before the sheriff of Cornwall in 1212 demonstrates that it was normal practice for household knights to report to John anything that might occur and which they might think touched on the king's interests.¹⁶³ The case concerned one Baldwin Tyrell, who was accused by Ranulf of Denbury and Gilbert de Germanville, two men of the royal household knight Alan de Dunstanville, of spreading rumours that King John had been killed in North Wales. The two men claimed that they, along with Alan's steward, had gone to the house of one of Alan's tenants where they found that the said Baldwin Tyrell had

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 92 b.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 72 b, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 153, 159 b (2), 166 b, 193 b.

¹⁶⁰ *Ancient Correspondence Wales*, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 258; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 173 b.

¹⁶² *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 144.

¹⁶³ *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, pp. 168–73.

barricaded the house against them.¹⁶⁴ When they enquired as to why they could not gain entry to their lord's fee whilst the king was still living, Baldwin allegedly replied that the king had been killed by his enemies in North Wales.¹⁶⁵ In the cold light of the sheriff's court room, Baldwin, not surprisingly, denied that he had said any such thing, and the case was held over to a future date. Baldwin was locked up in the sheriff's prison and Gilbert and Ranulf were placed in the custody of Alan de Dunstanville and Henry IV de la Pomeroy, another of John's household knights and an important Devonshire landholder, who had been drawn into the dispute.

Declaring the king's death was clearly a desperate crime and one which would bring down the full weight of John's *malevolentia* on the culprit. But Baldwin managed to persuade Alan's steward, who was supposed to have been a witness to the events, to stand up in court and deny that Baldwin had barricaded the house and declared the death of the king. Baldwin was seemingly off the hook and the two men who had accused him of the heinous crime were in trouble. As the author of the account put it, 'because Ranulf and Gilbert were in a suit concerning the death of the lord king, the sheriff of Cornwall and the coroners wished to retain the aforesaid Ranulf and Gilbert'. Clearly Alan de Dunstanville could see that his men were in trouble, and like any good lord he came to their rescue. He declared to the court that since he and Henry IV de la Pomeroy were 'de privata familia domini regis', and they had sworn an oath to report anything they heard which was against the interests of the king, they would therefore convey Ranulf and Gilbert to the king with all haste.¹⁶⁶ The sheriff immediately acquiesced to their request and the case was transferred to the king's court at Westminster.

The plan to rescue Ranulf and Gilbert eventually failed, but that, to us if not to Gilbert and Ranulf, is irrelevant. What is important is the fact that the case tells us a great deal about the role of household knights in the localities, even if they did not hold a prominent local office. In this case Alan de Dunstanville and Henry IV de la Pomeroy were solely interested in their own business, but they were also expected to be on the lookout for any discontent in their areas. They had actually sworn an oath, or so they claimed, that they would report to the king anything

¹⁶⁴ 'domum castellatam et britaschiatam'.

¹⁶⁵ 'dominus rex non erat vivens set murdritus inter inimicos suos in Norwallia'.

¹⁶⁶ 'jurati quod, si illi aliquid audirent quod fuisset contra dominum regem, domino regi illud intimarent; et dixerunt quod caperent predictos Rannulfum et Gilbertum in custodia et irent et ducerent predictos Rannulfum et Gilbertum ad hoc ostendedum domino regi cum festinatione.'

they heard that was against his interests; which, incidentally, makes one wonder why they did not take Baldwin Tyrell straight to the king. With the support of the two royal household knights, Ranulf and Gilbert obviously thought that they were on safe ground when they accused Baldwin Tyrell of proclaiming the king's death. The sheriff of Cornwall, John fitz Richard, was equally aware of the enormity of this crime, and when the case turned against the accusers he was determined to bring them to justice. Nevertheless, when Alan and Henry proclaimed their status and some of the contents of the oath they had sworn to the king, the sheriff was prepared to defer to the two king's knights. Even though he was the highest official representative of the king in the county, the sheriff clearly felt that household knights had a primacy in affairs that affected the king so directly. This case, coupled with the evidence from the civil war years, shows that even on a relatively informal level, household knights were expected to look out for the king's interests when going about their day-to-day business. These men were the eyes and the ears of the king in the localities.

As with the more informal arrangements that John made with his household knights described here, John used knights who knew particular regions for the more formal business of government in the shires. In 1207, Robert of Ropsley was appointed itinerant justice in Warwickshire, where, as we have seen, he was also sheriff and custodian of the lands of the earldom of Leicestershire.¹⁶⁷ Robert of Burgate held extensive lands in Suffolk in his own right and, after 1210, in right of his wife, Gallena, the widow of John Brewer.¹⁶⁸ As a landholder of some significance in this area he was used by the king as custodian of escheats in Norfolk and Suffolk,¹⁶⁹ he was given the custody of the honour of Eye, Suffolk, a few miles from Burgate itself, and he received custody of the bishopric of Norwich, both of which he held for a brief period in 1208.¹⁷⁰ In April 1213, he was used as the king's paymaster to those sergeants gathered in Norfolk preparing for the expected French invasion.¹⁷¹ It is clear that on this last occasion Robert was acting as the commander of the local forces, a role that was supposedly the preserve of the sheriff. We must therefore presume that Robert's actions were those of a man of considerable substance in Norfolk and Suffolk, but, importantly from the king's point of view, Robert was a man who was a trusted and loyal household servant.

¹⁶⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 72.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 130 b.

¹⁶⁹ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 398; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 80 b, 82; *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Lincolnshire, 1218–19, and Worcestershire, 1221*, ed. D. M. Stenton (Seldon Society, 53, 1934), p. 45 and note.

¹⁷⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 79, 81 (2); *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 108 b, 109.

¹⁷¹ *Docs. of English History*, 259; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 133.

We must be careful not to press this point too much further. There is no doubt that John did value the influence which his household knights could wield in their particular areas. This was not, however, the overriding principle by which the king decided what to do with his escheats, wardships, custodies, and sheriffdoms. For every household knight who was given custody of a royal castle, or shire, or royal escheat in his area, another can be found whose grants seem to bear no relation to their previous areas of major concern. Even household knights such as Robert of Burgate, who obtained many positions of importance in Norfolk and Suffolk through his connections with these counties, were employed by the king in areas in which they seem to have had little or no influence. For example, Robert was at one time custodian of the archbishopric of York and of the castle and honour of Knaresborough during Brian de Lisle's brief estrangement from John.¹⁷²

This point is brought even more starkly into relief by the case of Geoffrey Luttrell. Geoffrey's interests lay originally in Nottinghamshire, where he was a loyal supporter of Count John.¹⁷³ Sometime between 1202 and 1203, Geoffrey was given the hand of Frethesant, one of the co-heirs of William Paine, in marriage. This brought him seven and a half knights' fees in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, which effectively switched his power base away from Nottinghamshire.¹⁷⁴ Geoffrey received only one escheat from the king in Yorkshire.¹⁷⁵ The majority of the work which Geoffrey performed for the king lay outside of this county. He was an itinerant justice in Norfolk and Suffolk,¹⁷⁶ an area in which he seems to have had no interest; he was used extensively in Ireland, for which no connection before his arrival can be found;¹⁷⁷ and he was regularly employed within the royal household. It is, of course, not impossible that the king deliberately placed Geoffrey in Yorkshire specifically to be a trusted knight in a notoriously difficult area. Scott Waugh has shown how English kings used the marriages of heirs to place their familiars into mainstream society, 'to bridge the gap between court and local community'.¹⁷⁸ Despite holding a significant amount of land in this county, however, Geoffrey never seems to have been able to influence events with any assurance or regularity.

It was the successful implantation of royal officials in the north which, in Holt's view, contributed to the Northerners' revolt at the end

¹⁷² *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 89 (3).

¹⁷³ *Pipe Rolls* 6 Richard I, p. 84; 7 Richard I, p. 18, 259; *Chancellor's Roll* 8 Richard I, p. 270.

¹⁷⁴ *Pipe Roll* 5 John, pp. 201 (3), 202, 206, 211.

¹⁷⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 48 b.

¹⁷⁶ *Feet of Fines Norfolk and Suffolk*, pp. 239, 240.

¹⁷⁷ See p. 57. ¹⁷⁸ Waugh, *Lordship of England*, p. 191.

of the reign.¹⁷⁹ But here he was referring to the appointment of officials rather than the granting of lands, for example, the placement of Brian de Lisle at Knaresborough and Boroughbridge.¹⁸⁰ Holt considered that 'the whole tenor of [John's] policy was to bring all areas equally under his personal supervision and to ensure the execution of his policies everywhere throughout the land'.¹⁸¹ There is little doubt that John used his knights as an integral part of this policy, hence their extensive use as administrators in the realm. However, the example of Geoffrey Luttrell should warn us that it is not always wise to present a picture of a concerted and coherent policy on the part of the king when he assigned various responsibilities to particular individuals. Geoffrey may well have been deliberately implanted by the king into Yorkshire society, we shall never know, but what is clear is that John never really took advantage of Geoffrey's position.

It is also difficult to perceive the king granting lands and wardships to particular knights in order to strengthen their positions in local society. John of Bassingbourne, for example, benefited from this type of grant in Essex.¹⁸² However, as Waugh has shown, the king had many other considerations when he granted a wardship. Household knights were in an ideal position to lobby for wardships in their areas, and the king also had to give consideration to who deserved these rewards and who was next in line; he did not, after all, have an inexhaustible supply of such grants.¹⁸³ As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, the king had far more important concerns when he dispensed his feudal dues to his household knights.

It seems then that John was very aware of the advantages that might accrue to him with his household knights placed firmly in the localities. The king used his knights as local watchdogs and occasionally seems to have deliberately strengthened a knight's position in a particular area. To say, however, that John pursued a consistent policy of building up the power bases of individual knights would be stretching the evidence too far. No doubt John was not blind to the possibilities of having reliable supporters with powerful local interests, since we know that he allowed William Brewer to establish a power block in the west country.¹⁸⁴ He certainly seems not to have objected to certain knights following Brewer's example. None of John's knights, however,

¹⁷⁹ Holt, *Northerners*, p. 194.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 221–2.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁸² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 41.

¹⁸³ Waugh, *Lordship of England*, pp. 146, 183, 189, 192.

¹⁸⁴ Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust*, pp. 80–3.

managed to build up a power base that even remotely resembled that of Brewer's.

Many household knights were used by John to carry out duties as royal diplomats. This business could vary from a mission to the papal curia to the collection of mercenaries for the king's army. Much of the work that these individuals carried out was evidently secret, and so the purpose of the various journeys undertaken by the knights was seldom recorded. Occasionally the household clerks expressed their perplexity at the intent of the journey by the phrase *nescivimus quo*.¹⁸⁵ But it is possible to offer some suggestions as to why household knights were sent on missions to certain places. Poitou, for example, was a favoured destination because John was laying the foundations there of his intended reconquest of the lost Angevin continental lands. Godfrey of Crowcombe was a regular visitor to Poitou on the king's business. In July 1209, Godfrey was sent into Poitou 'in nuntium domini regis'.¹⁸⁶ Immediately below this payment to Godfrey was enrolled a payment to a master Elias de Perariis, a clerk of Savari de Mauléon, one of John's supporters in Poitou, 'eunti ad dominum suum'. This perhaps suggests that Godfrey too was going to Savari de Mauléon who in the previous May had been unsuccessfully courted by Philip Augustus.¹⁸⁷ Godfrey was back in England by the following year, but was again in Poitou in November 1212, when he appears to have been heavily involved in the defence of the county with Geoffrey de Lucy, John de Porta, John Galern, and William Salom. They had 2,000 marks for the defence of Poitou and in addition Godfrey was responsible for paying £200 to sailors for ninety days' service.¹⁸⁸ Early in 1215, Godfrey and the household knight Thomas le Bret were both responsible, with Emeric de Sascy and two of the king's sergeants, for issuing instructions to the knights and bachelors of Poitou whom John had asked to come to him with all haste to aid his cause against the barons. In March that same year, John advised them that he no longer required their services and entrusted the task of informing the Poitevin knights of his decision to Godfrey and Thomas.¹⁸⁹ Other household knights also spent time in Poitou, presumably in defence of the king's interests in that county. On 19 February 1210, William Houdri, Gilbert of Kentwell and Ralph fitz Nicholas were each given 100 shillings for the purchase of horses whilst

¹⁸⁵ E.g. *Docs. of English History*, pp. 238, 242.

¹⁸⁶ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 119.

¹⁸⁷ Chaytor, *Savari de Mauléon*, pp. 15–19.

¹⁸⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 126.

¹⁸⁹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 130; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 190 b; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 29.

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on the king's business in Poitou.¹⁹⁰ None of these knights had returned to join the king on the Irish campaign in the summer of that year and it may be supposed that they were still in Poitou.¹⁹¹

The papal curia is another place where we find John's household knights used extensively as royal nuncios; here, too, it is possible to suppose that these men were actively engaged in pursuing John's interests. In 1210, for example, our old friend and royalist stalwart Godfrey of Crowcombe was sent on the first of many missions to the papal curia. Godfrey's companions on this trip were the household knights, Thomas of Erdington and Adam de St-Martin.¹⁹² In 1215, there was a flurry of activity as the king sent his most trusted men to the papal court to put his case against his barons. Godfrey of Crowcombe, who by this stage seems to have been almost a professional diplomat, was in Rome in November 1215. Roger of Wendover has it that Godfrey, along with the abbot of Beaulieu and, once again, with the household knight Thomas of Erdington, presented John's accusation at the Fourth Lateran Council that Stephen Langton had been conniving with the rebel barons.¹⁹³ Geoffrey Luttrell, another household knight, was also sent to the papal court. Geoffrey was in Rome at the end of 1215, when he was to stand surety for an agreement between King John and Berengaria, the widow of King Richard.¹⁹⁴ Both Godfrey of Crowcombe and Geoffrey Luttrell were clearly held in high esteem by John. The king patently appreciated qualities in these two household knights which one might not traditionally associate with a knight.

Germany and the Low Countries were also favoured destinations for John's household knights towards the end of the reign when the king was building alliances in preparation for the long-awaited showdown with Philip Augustus. The envoys of John's cousin, the Emperor Otto of Brunswick, were regular attendants at John's court.¹⁹⁵ John, in his turn, sent his household knights on missions to the imperial court. On 24 March 1209, for example, Thomas Malesmains was given letters patent to go into Germany with John's half-brother, the earl of Salisbury.¹⁹⁶ In the following February, Gilbert de Sanes received 15 marks for going to

¹⁹⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 150.

¹⁹¹ Gilbert of Kentwell was pardoned the scutage of Ireland (*Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 32), although he does not appear on the extensive lists of knights on the prestita roll for that campaign.

¹⁹² *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 151.

¹⁹³ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 633.

¹⁹⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 182 b (2); Painter, *King John*, p. 366.

¹⁹⁵ E.g. *Docs. of English History*, p. 232; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 118 b; *Pipe Roll 14 John*, p. 23; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 133; and see N. Fryde, 'King John and the empire', in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge, 1999).

¹⁹⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 89 b.

the emperor.¹⁹⁷ Contact between John and Otto continued even after the débâcle of Bouvines, and in May 1215 Robert of Burgate and Robert of Ropsley were dispatched to Otto, who was spending his retirement years in Saxony.¹⁹⁸ In 1213, as preparations were afoot for John's intended invasion, John sent Brian de Lisle and Henry fitz Count along with the earl of Salisbury, count of Boulogne and Hugh de Boves, to Ferrand count of Flanders to confirm the plans they had for the intended campaign.¹⁹⁹ Regrettably the chancery scribes did not state what the purposes of any of these missions were, but we must surmise that they were related to negotiations for the alliance between John and Otto IV against Philip Augustus.²⁰⁰

Household knights were also dispatched to various parts of Britain. In May 1209, for example, Gilbert of Kentwell received a payment to go to Llywelyn ap Iowerth, Prince of North Wales.²⁰¹ Geoffrey Luttrell seems to have a long connection with royal business in Ireland. On 26 March 1204, he was ordered to preside over a case between Meiler fitz Henry, the king's Justiciar of Ireland, and William de Burgh. Geoffrey was associated in this task with Walter de Lacy, Henry, archdeacon of Stafford, and William Petit.²⁰² Two days later Meiler fitz Henry was ordered to hand over £10 sterling to Geoffrey for his sustenance in the king's service, presumably for the pursuit of the court case mentioned before.²⁰³ This was to be the beginning of a long association with Ireland for this household knight. In November the same year, Geoffrey was again dispatched to Ireland. This time he was accompanied by David, bishop elect of Waterford, Henry Biset, Ralph of Cirencester, and Reginald of Cordewan.²⁰⁴ Although the order does not say for what purpose Geoffrey and his colleagues were sent, it seems likely that it was to ensure the investiture of the new bishop of Waterford.

As has already been seen, Geoffrey Luttrell also played a major part in the transportation of the expeditionary force which was sent to Ireland in 1210.²⁰⁵ In September 1210, he returned to Ireland 'in nuntium domini regis'.²⁰⁶ With the lacuna in the sources during this period, it is not possible to be certain about whether he remained in Ireland

¹⁹⁷ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 151.

¹⁹⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 137 b.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

²⁰⁰ B. Arnold, 'England and Germany, 1050-1350', in *England and her Neighbours, 1066-1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais*, ed. M. Jones and M. Vale (London, 1989), pp. 45 and 46-7.

²⁰¹ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 111.

²⁰² *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 39 b (2), 41 b; *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 133 b, 139 b.

²⁰³ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 83.

²⁰⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 48; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 14 b.

²⁰⁵ See p. 41.

²⁰⁶ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 230.

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between 1210 and 1212 or returned to England. It is clear, however, that Geoffrey was in Ireland in the summer of 1212, when Wilekin, his messenger, was sent to him with a message from the king.²⁰⁷ Geoffrey remained in Ireland as the king's bailiff, and also sheriff of Dublin, at least until the summer of 1215, when he was recalled so that he could be sent to the papal curia on John's behalf.²⁰⁸

Of course the most famous account of a royal diplomatic mission was that reputedly undertaken in 1213 by the household knights Thomas of Erdington and Ralph fitz Nicholas, and the royal clerk Robert of London to Mohammed el Nassir, emir of Morocco.²⁰⁹ Matthew Paris, who claimed to have heard the story from Robert of London, recounted how these men had received instructions from John to offer the crown of England to the emir. The story is clearly a vehicle for the expression of Paris' petty prejudices against King John and in no way can be taken seriously.²¹⁰ The emir was made to despise John for his willingness to give up himself and his kingdom to another king and religion; Paris thus achieved his main aim, which was to show in what contempt John was held by other rulers as well as his own subjects. As an accurate account of an event the story has little value. It does, however, provide an interesting insight into the use of knights by kings as diplomats to foreign countries. The diplomatic team described by Paris comprised two knights and one clerk. That this format was usual seems likely since there are other references to two knights and a clerk engaged in diplomatic embassies. In the same year as Paris placed the mission to the emir of Morocco, for example, Thomas of Erdington, one of the supposed participants in this affair, Philip of Worcester, another household knight, and master Richard of Terrington were redeemed by John for £1,000, after they had been taken captive during a diplomatic delegation.²¹¹ In 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council, John's representatives who spoke against Stephen Langton were the household knights Thomas of Erdington and Geoffrey Luttrell and the abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Beulieu, John's own foundation and so endowed with a special relationship with this king.²¹² Perhaps

²⁰⁷ *Docs. of English History*, p. 233.

²⁰⁸ *St Mary's Cartularies*, Dublin, i, p. 249; *Register of St Thomas*, p. 17; 'Irish pipe roll', pp. 7–13; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 137, 146, 188 b, 191; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 147 b–148; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 556; *Rot. Chart.*, p. 210.

²⁰⁹ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 559–64.

²¹⁰ Though one historian has begun the hopeless task of trying to rebuild the credibility of the story: N. Vincent, 'Isabella of Angoulême: John's Jezebel', in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge, 1999).

²¹¹ *Docs. of English History*, p. 256.

²¹² *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 633.

surprisingly in Paris' account of the mission to the emir of Morocco, it was the knight Thomas of Erdington, 'as the most eloquent of the messengers', who spoke on John's behalf to the emir. So it is clear that the knights in whom John entrusted diplomatic missions did not always play a supporting role to the clerk. Sometimes these knights took the lead in the negotiations and the clerk was left in the background. But what is really to be regretted is that most of this diplomatic business was carried out by word of mouth. Most of the business was so secret that all the knights had were letters of credence so that they had the written authorisation of the king to speak on his behalf. These men were the most trusted of the king's servants, as is demonstrated by the fact that they were expected to 'explain fully [John's] wishes' without the need to seek the king's advice.²¹³ As his most trusted servants, the household knights and, indeed, clerks carried John's wishes and commands to all parts of the Angevin lands and beyond.

From the evidence presented in the discussion so far, it is apparent that the king did not constantly surround himself by all his household knights all of the time. Many of John's knights pursued other duties besides caring for the king's person. Men who were royal sheriffs, bailiffs, and castellans would have attended the king only when he was in the immediate vicinity.²¹⁴ It is clear, however, that some royal knights did perform duties in the king's *curia*, and it is with these individuals that this section of the chapter is concerned.

John's knights assumed some of the functions of household officials. Thomas Sturmy, for example, performed duties concerned with the king's buttery. From June 1213 until sometime after 21 April 1215, Thomas acquired wine for the king's use from the various places where it was stored.²¹⁵ He also authorised the acquisition of carts for the conveyance of the royal buttery around the country.²¹⁶ Another household knight who performed many duties in the king's household, including in the buttery, was Thomas le Bret. On 26 February 1208, the

²¹³ The reported words of King John refer to William Brewer in *The Chronicle of the Election of Hugh Abbot of Bury St Edmunds and Later Bishop of Ely*, ed. R. M. Thomson (Oxford, 1974), pp. 162–3.

²¹⁴ Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, pp. 156–7.

²¹⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 140, 159, 196.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158 b. Another king's knight, John Russell, held half a hide of land in Kingston, Dorset, as marshal of the king's buttery at Christmas and Pentecost (*Book of Fees*, pp. 92, 342; *Red Book*, p. 546, from the time of William I), and one virgate of land in Wiltshire by the service of two measures ('buscorum') of wine to be dispensed at the four feasts of each year (*Red Book*, pp. 488, 484, 461). Nowhere does John appear to perform any functions related to the king's buttery, and it is clear that this was one of the 'decorative Great Offices of tradition' (Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship*, p. 201).

mayor of Winchester was ordered to hand over one cask of wine to Thomas for the use of the king.²¹⁷ In May 1212, Thomas gave money for the expenses of Conrad Wike, Conrad Dike, and Roger de Merham, messengers of John's nephew, Otto.²¹⁸ On 12 June 1212, Thomas again gave money for the expenses of the emperor's messengers.²¹⁹ On 1 July 1212, he gave money for the expenses of Edgar de Gaweia,²²⁰ who had come to the king with twenty horses and twenty men for four days.²²¹ In September 1212, Thomas paid for the hire of twenty carts and three horses for the conveyance of the king's wine from Southampton to Nottingham, where the king was staying when the order was given.²²² Thomas' duties in the household seem to have ended by 1214 when he was in Spain on the king's business.²²³ Geoffrey Luttrell also performed duties connected with the king's buttery in between the missions on which he was sent by the king. From November 1205, Geoffrey authorised letters for the acquisition of wine.²²⁴ On 10 January 1208, Geoffrey was again to be found authorising the acquisition of wine, a function that he continued to perform until the end of John's ninth regnal year.²²⁵ When the sources take up their course again in 1212, Geoffrey was in Ireland. As well as his other duties, Robert of Burgate also worked within the household. On 21 February 1207, he was one of two witnesses to an order sent by the king for Robert of Thornham to take corn to Flanders.²²⁶ In October 1209, Robert was responsible for paying 20 shillings to Conpaignun, a messenger of the Emperor Otto.²²⁷ In the following year John actually described Robert as 'unum militem de domo nostra'.²²⁸ Some of John's knights were also given duties within the queen's *domus*. Between September 1212 and April 1213, for example, Ralph of Raleigh appeared in the queen's household.²²⁹

One of the more perplexing questions to arise from the material on the king's *domus* is just how often household knights were with the king. Did, for example, John's knights serve in rotation, each knight spending a certain amount of time *in curia*, or did John keep particular knights with him for protracted periods, sending them away from court only on specific missions? It is clear from what has been said above that

²¹⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 104, 104 b.

²¹⁸ *Docs. of English History*, p. 232.

²¹⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, 118 b; *Pipe Roll 14 John*, p. 23.

²²⁰ Galloway?

²²¹ *Docs. of English History*, p. 235.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 241.

²²³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 163 b.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

²²⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 100 b, 104, 104 b–105, 106, 107 b, 108 b, 110 b.

²²⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 59 b, the other being Peter fitz Herbert.

²²⁷ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 133.

²²⁸ *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 107.

²²⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 123 b, 126; *Docs. of English History*, pp. 248, 256, 257, 259.

the household knights were not in constant attendance upon the king's person. J. S. Critchley has demonstrated, moreover, that in the 1220s Henry III had to summon his household knights when he wanted them in one place at a particular time.²³⁰ This would hardly have been necessary had they all been within the king's court. But is it possible to show who was *in curia* at any one time?

There are a number of avenues that may be explored in an attempt to provide an answer to this question. As we have just seen, to some extent the duties that John's knights performed give an indication of who was with the king at any time. If a man was on a diplomatic mission, for example, then patently he was not with the king. Similarly if a man was in the king's buttry, then we may assume that he was with the king. In conjunction with this material it is also possible to use witness lists to royal charters. The use of witness lists for this purpose does, however, provide one particular problem of which we must be aware: presumably only if a household knight were high in the king's favour would he be included in witness lists. The vast majority of knights simply do not appear as witnesses to the king's charters. But by combining biographical evidence with the material from the witness lists, it is occasionally possible to give an impression of a household knight's movements in and out of court over the period of his career.

Geoffrey Luttrell, for example, was amongst the most habitual of attestors to John's royal charters. Between November 1204 and September 1215, he witnessed forty-four charters, and the pattern of these attestations fits well into the known outline of Geoffrey's career. Between November 1204 and November 1205, he witnessed nine charters before being sent to Poitou in January 1206.²³¹ Two years later Geoffrey was back in the king's curia where he witnessed a further eighteen charters between January 1208 and February 1209.²³² The charter rolls then fail us until 1212 by which time Geoffrey was in Ireland.²³³ On his return from Ireland in June 1215, however, he immediately took up as one of the regular witnesses to royal charters, attesting to a further sixteen between June and the time of his departure to the papal curia in mid-September 1215.²³⁴ On his return from Rome in January 1216 and shortly before his death, Geoffrey witnessed his last

²³⁰ Critchley, 'Summonses', pp. 86–7.

²³¹ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 139 b, 147, 148 b, 151 b, 156 b, 157 b, 160, 161, 165; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 61 b, 62, 63.

²³² *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 174 b, 175, 175 b, 176, 176 b, 180, 181 b, 182 b, 183 b (3), 184 b (2), 185 (3), 185 b (2).

²³³ *Docs. of English History*, p. 233.

²³⁴ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 210 (3), 211 (2), 212 b, 213 (2), 215 b, 216 (2), 216 b, 218 b, 219 (3); *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 182 b (2).

royal charter.²³⁵ It is clear from this outline that Geoffrey spent a considerable period of time *in curia*. Between November 1204 and November 1205, January 1208 and February 1209, and June 1215 and September 1216, Geoffrey was in constant attendance upon John. During these periods, he was presumably one of the king's trusted counsellors, that group of individuals who surrounded the king and did much to foster resentment against King John. Geoffrey's career shows us that John did not rotate the knights at his court on a regular basis. When the king wanted Geoffrey in attendance, Geoffrey came to court. Once the king commissioned Geoffrey with another mission *extra curiam*, then he was no longer to be found amongst the royal circle.

Other members of the royal knightly household can also be found at court attesting some of John's charters. Brian de Lisle witnessed forty-one royal charters between 1205 and 1215. Brian seems to have been in the king's presence in June 1205, shortly before he received custody of the Stuteville honour.²³⁶ He was briefly at court in August 1208 and then again at the end of March 1209 when, after his temporary estrangement, he must have been reconciled with the king.²³⁷ Brian was with John at regular intervals throughout most of 1213, 1214, and the first half of 1215. The charters in which he appears as a witness in 1213 culminated, on 3 October, in his promotion to the position of steward of the household.²³⁸ He was constantly with the king during the campaign in Poitou where he witnessed no fewer than eighteen charters.²³⁹ In 1215, Brian was with the king throughout the difficult month of July before he was dispatched to duties outside the court for the rest of the reign.²⁴⁰ The pattern of Brian's attestations to royal charters provides an interesting contrast to that displayed by Geoffrey Luttrell. Until 1213, Brian was plainly employed by John in duties away from court and rarely appeared at the king's side. When he took up the position of steward of the household, however, Brian's presence at court became much more regular.

Robert of Ropsley, another household knight who enjoyed a spell in which he was high in royal favour, witnessed twenty charters during the reign. At first, though, Robert attested only when the king's itinerary brought him close to Robert's own location; for example, Robert witnessed the king's charters during his tenure as constable of Bristol

²³⁵ *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 140.

²³⁶ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 155 b, 156, 158; Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 221–2.

²³⁷ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 181 b, 182, 185 b; Holt, *Northerners*, p. 227.

²³⁸ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 190 (2), 191, 191 b, 195 ('dapifer nostro').

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 197 b, 198 b, 199 b (4), 200 (3), 200 b (4), 201 (2), 201 b (2).

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 212, 214, 214 b, 216, 216 b (2).

castle only when John visited the city.²⁴¹ By contrast, during the 1214 campaign in Poitou, Robert witnessed twelve charters.²⁴² The regularity of Robert's attestations during this period suggests that he played a major part in the planning and execution of this expedition. In May 1215, Robert witnessed a further two charters.²⁴³ Shortly after this he was dispatched to Otto of Brunswick with Peter de Maulay, Robert of Burgate, and William de St-John.²⁴⁴ Robert was listed by Wendover as one of the king's supporters on 15 June, but shortly afterwards he defected to the rebel side.²⁴⁵ The number of occasions on which Robert witnessed John's charters demonstrates that when he was in the court he was usually listed as a witness. This strongly suggests that, except during his time in Poitou, Robert was a knight who spent little time in the presence of the king, and that his main duties lay outside of the court.

John of Bassingbourne also witnessed a comparatively large number of John's charters. Between May 1205 and October 1214, he attested eighteen charters and, like Geoffrey Luttrell and Robert of Ropsley before, he was obviously included as a witness whenever he was in attendance on the king.²⁴⁶ John Russell was a regular witness to royal charters in the last year or so of John's life, and had obviously moved into the ranks of John's immediate circle comparatively late in the reign. Between July 1215 and July 1216, he witnessed nineteen charters and was clearly in constant attendance on the king during this difficult period.²⁴⁷

The evidence shows that, at least amongst the knights who were important enough to appear on charter witness lists, John did not operate a system whereby his knights took turns to serve at his side. Whether the household knights at the lower end displayed similar patterns of service is not easy to ascertain. Knights such as Thomas Sturmy, Thomas le Bret, and Ralph of Raleigh certainly showed similar patterns of long service *in domo* and did not seem to take turns to appear at court. But it is worth noting that even knights like Thomas Sturmy and Ralph of Raleigh are to be found occasionally witnessing to the king's charters.²⁴⁸ Though in their own way significant individuals,

²⁴¹ September 1205 (*Rot. Chart.*, p. 159 b); September 1207 (*ibid.*, p. 170 b).

²⁴² *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 196, 197, 197 b, 199 b (4), 200 b (2), 201 (3).

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 137 b, 207. ²⁴⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 137 b.

²⁴⁵ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 589.

²⁴⁶ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 150, 156, 162, 176, 183 b (2), 184, 185 b, 187, 189 b, 190 b, 191, 191 b (3), 192 b, 202 (2).

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 212 b, 218 (2), 218 b (3), 219 (2), 219 b, 221 b, 222 b (3), 223 (3), 223 b (3).

²⁴⁸ Thomas Sturmy (*Rot. Chart.*, pp. 200, 206 b, 199 b, 201); Ralph of Raleigh (*Rot. Chart.*, pp. 201, 209 b).

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these men were not as important to the king as knights such as Robert Peverel, Ralph de Trumbleville, and Henry IV de la Pomeroy, who did not witness royal charters, or Roger and Walter of Clifford jnr, who witnessed charters on just one occasion each.²⁴⁹ As a result we are left to wonder whether household knights whose status was no higher than the Sturmys of this world might eventually have appeared as witnesses to royal charters if they had come to court often enough. If this were the case, it perhaps suggests that most of John's knights rarely spent protracted periods of time in the king's immediate entourage, and that in the main, as indeed their career patterns indicate, their primary employment was *extra curiam*. This point is made even more clearly if we consider those knights who in 1210 were deputed to act as the king's bodyguard.²⁵⁰ There were ten of these men named, each of whom must have lived in very close proximity to John for the sixty-three days that the campaign lasted. But only two of these men, the brothers Geoffrey and William de Serland, each of whom must have been chosen for their fighting ability rather than their dinner-table conversation, could lay claim to being significant members of the royal household.²⁵¹ These men, although they were physically close to John during the Irish campaign, did not, by-and-large, acquire the intimacy necessary to rise high in the ranks of the *milites de familia regis*. The level of trust achieved by men such as Godfrey of Crowcombe, Brian de Lisle, and Geoffrey Luttrell did not come from the simple act of serving in the king's entourage, even if that was as a bodyguard.

The reasons why it is important to know which of John's knights remained close to him are, I think, readily apparent. Proximity to the king meant access to the very fount of power in England. As historians of later periods have shown, the men who were closest to the king were the men who both wielded the greatest influence in the realm and acquired the most lucrative rewards that royal service could bring.²⁵² As will be shown later, those household knights of King John who were able to get closest to the king were also those who received the greatest

²⁴⁹ Roger of Clifford (*Rot. Chart.*, 223 b (2)); Walter jnr (*Rot. Chart.*, p. 224).

²⁵⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 191.

²⁵¹ Geoffrey who was, *inter alia*, custodian of the bishopric of Winchester in 1208 (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 108 b); with William, constable of Carrickfergus, Ireland, in 1212 (*Docs. of English History*, pp. 233, 234, 244, 257, 265); and constable of Sauvey, Leicestershire (*Foedera*, i, 1, p. 144; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 244, 245 b, 258, 259, 277; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 167, 168, 173 b). Elias de Mareville made two appearances at the end of the reign, one as a witness to a charter to Savari de Mauléon (*Rot. Chart.*, p. 220 b), the other as a household knight mustered at St Albans in December 1215 (Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 16).

²⁵² E.g. D. Starkey, 'Court and government', in *Revolution Reassessed: Revisions in the History of Tudor Government and Administration*, ed. C. Coleman and D. Starkey (Oxford, 1986), pp. 29–58.

rewards for their service. Since detailed evidence does not exist, we can only speculate as to the power and influence which these knights exercised over the king by virtue of their proximity,²⁵³ but that they were trusted with exercising the most important governmental tasks is beyond any doubt.

There are a number of important conclusions to be drawn from this general survey of the functions performed by John's household knights. The first job of a knight was, not surprisingly given his training, to fight, and no man joined the ranks of the royal knightly establishment without first proving himself with arms. If that knight became a useful servant, he might be given duties other than martial ones. Many of John's knights did branch out into non-fighting activities, and the number of men included in this chapter who performed these other tasks demonstrates that the king used his household knights extensively in non-martial fields. In all it is possible to show that at least half of these household knights were involved in work either unrelated to or only tangentially related to the business of fighting. The internal hierarchy of the knights in the royal household was reflected in the functions that an individual performed and, ultimately, the rewards that he received from the king. Those individuals who were honoured with the most delicate tasks by the king were his most trusted knights. Not surprisingly, those entrusted with these duties received the greatest remuneration from John.²⁵⁴ But when all is said and done, there were probably about a dozen household knights who could be described as being amongst the first rank of royal *familiars* at any point during the reign, and a further thirty or so who may be described as being above the ranks of the simple fighting knights. The overwhelming impression is that John placed a great deal of confidence in a select group of his household knights. The remainder of the royal household knights whose names have come down to us were not in this category. They were the proverbial fighting knights whose main responsibilities lay in the martial sphere.

²⁵³ E.g. both Brian de Lisle and Robert of Burgate won money from John and clearly shared pastimes with the king. Perhaps some knights, at least, were able to break down the hierarchical relationship between master and servant and to enjoy a less formal rapport with the king (*Docs. of English History*, p. 239; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 176, 181).

²⁵⁴ See ch. 4.

THE REWARDS OF ROYAL SERVICE¹

Royal service in the middle ages gave considerable scope for individuals to advance both their own and their family's wealth and power.² Long and loyal service in the king's household could bring great reward. The king had a vast amount of patronage at his disposal which he could use to propel favoured *familiares* into the ranks of the aristocracy. Indeed, royal service provided the quickest route to wealth and status in medieval society, which is one of the reasons why men strove to obtain a position in the king's entourage. But whilst historians now accept this general premise that the men who served the king in the royal household could be catapulted into the higher ranks of English society, many insist that for the average household knight, the receipt of money in the form of wages and money fiefs was the normal, day-to-day reward that these men sought. Moreover, it is argued, these types of payments were in operation from as early as the reign of Henry I, if not before.³

The argument that many household knights received money as the primary form of reward for royal service is clearly a compelling one. Eadmer, for example, tells us of a speech that Archbishop Anselm made to the monks of Canterbury before setting out to Rome in 1097. In this speech he likened those who served the king in the secular court to those who served the Ruler of all men in this world. In doing so,

¹ This chapter is largely reproduced from S. D. Church, 'The rewards of royal service in the household of King John: a dissenting opinion', *EHR*, 110 (1995), pp. 277–302.

² The best treatments of this subject are in R. W. Southern, 'The place of Henry I in English history', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 48 (1962), pp. 127–69; J. E. Lally, 'Secular patronage at the court of King Henry II', *BIHR*, 49 (1976), pp. 159–84; Waugh, *Lordship of England*.

³ See esp. J. O. Prestwich, 'Military household', pp. 1–35, whose views on the subject have become the orthodoxy, cf. for example Given-Wilson, 'The king and the gentry in fourteenth-century England', p. 88; S. D. B. Brown, 'The mercenary and his master: military service and monetary reward in the eleventh and twelfth centuries', *History*, 74 (1989), pp. 20–38, at pp. 23–4, 29.

Anselm identified three types of *milites* who served in the courts of secular princes. Some, he said, 'are active in his service for lands which they hold from him; he has others who bear arms and toil on his behalf *pro stipendiis*; and he has yet others who labour . . . for the sake of receiving back an inheritance of which they bewail the loss through their parents' fault'.⁴ There is no reason to suppose that Anselm was giving the full story when it came to the reasons that men served in the royal household. To take just one example, he has nothing to say about those who entered royal service because of a family tradition; this would not, after all, have fitted into the moral of his story. But it is clear that some men at least served in return for monetary reward ('*pro stipendiis*'), even if others served for different reasons.

The obvious question that arises from Archbishop Anselm's words as reported by Eadmer is how normal was it for the *milites* of secular princes to serve in return for monetary reward, and did this form of payment extend to the members of the *familia regis* in this period? J. O. Prestwich, in what was a path-breaking article published in 1981, argued that it did. According to him, those in 'Henry I's military household . . . received . . . regular wages . . . and it attracted men from outside Henry's dominions who were retained by annual fees', that is, money fiefs.⁵ The evidence, however, does not necessarily fit with Prestwich's interpretation, and his views are made more questionable in the light of the evidence from King John's reign.

Prestwich's case for the regular payment of wages and money fiefs to household knights by Henry I rests in substantial part on the words of Walter Map writing between about 1181 and 1192. So crucial are Map's words to Prestwich's thesis that they are worth quoting in full:

Every youth on this side of the Alps whom [Henry I] heard of as desiring the renown of a good start in life, he enrolled in his household, and any who had a smaller yearly allowance than 100 shillings received that sum by the hand of [Henry's] messenger; and whenever it happened that [the youth] was sent for by the king, he received at his coming a shilling for every day after he left his residence.⁶

Prestwich's view was that here we have clear evidence that Henry I was well acquainted with the practice of paying money fiefs and wages to his household knights. There is, however, another reading of this important passage. The first point to make is that in the context of the

⁴ *The Life of St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury by Eadmer*, ed. R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1962), p. 94.

⁵ J. O. Prestwich, 'Military household', pp. 8–9.

⁶ *Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 470–1.

work, Walter Map does not provide us with unambiguous evidence about the practice of Henry I's household. He was writing his work in the 1180s, around fifty years after Henry I's death, and even if we are generous in allowing Walter an especially good memory and a long life (he died at some point between 1208 and 1210), it is stretching a point to argue that he had a contemporary view of Henry I's court.⁷ Walter's comments on Henry I's reign were, moreover, very obviously written in the context of the 'good old days', when the king was generous, the kingdom wealthy and peaceful, when 'all covetousness held its hand [and] no one but an idiot was poor'. Walter goes on to say in the same passage that 'whoever made it his object to live at the expense of others was everywhere so kindly maintained that in no place need he blush for his mean state'.⁸ Obviously Walter intended that his audience compare the generosity of Henry I with the meanness of his own master, Henry II. In Henry II's time, according to Walter Map's gripe, it cost good money to live at court.⁹

The second point is that Walter Map did not actually say that Henry I customarily paid his foreign retainers wages and money fiefs. What he wrote was that *if* a youth desired a good start in life, but did not have the means to pursue a successful career, that is he had an allowance of less than £5 a year, *then* Henry would find the necessary amount to sustain him. The passage does not really show how these men were supported whilst they were at court, rather it suggests that it was only during the journey from his homeland that he received his shilling a day.¹⁰ In any event, Map's message is clear: in Good King Henry's day, poverty was not a bar to success.

The second linchpin of Prestwich's argument rested on a clause that appeared in a treaty between Count Robert of Flanders and Henry I at

⁷ A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), pp. 242–3.

⁸ *Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 472–3.

⁹ It is also worth pointing to Walter Map's comments about the organisation of Henry I's household (*Walter Map, De Nugis Curialium*, pp. 438–9). He says that Henry I had the constitutions of his house and household written down, 'as ordained by himself', so that 'it might always have plentiful supplies, and very regular changes arranged long before hand, and publicly known, of staying or moving from every place, and that every foremost man in the land, who are called barons, when they came to it, might have definite allowances of the king's bounty; of his household, that no one might be in want, but each receive his fixed grants.' Again the contrast with Henry II's court and household is there for all in the know to see. Henry II's household was not well organised, in fact according to Peter of Blois, Henry II delighted in throwing his household into disarray by changing his plans at short notice and causing the household to 'give a lively imitation of Hell' (quoted from W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), pp. 209–10).

¹⁰ 'quandocunque contigisset ab ipso mandari, suscipiebat in aduentu suo singulis diebus a recessu residencie sue singulos solidos.'

Dover in 1101.¹¹ The particular clause that attracted his attention referred to the terms by which the count and his men would serve in Henry's armies. The treaty stated that 'si comes Rotbertus vel sui homines in auxilium regis venerint, quamdiu in Anglia fuerint erunt ad victum regis et rex reddet eis perdita eorum facta in Anglia sicut mos est rederre familie sue'.¹² Prestwich combined this statement with Walter Map's testimony on the payment of wages and money fiefs and with the evidence provided by the indentures that survive from the Hundred Years War, where wage-rates were not specified because they were well known, to show that this clause of the treaty demonstrates that royal wage-rates had become standardised by 1101 for the *familia regis*.¹³ As the treaty states, the count and his men were to serve under the same terms as those knights in Henry's household: they received sustenance and the replacement of their losses. But was sustenance, the *victus* of this treaty, meant to be understood as wages? A similar agreement from a hundred years later between the count of Holland and King John, which stated that the count's knights were to serve 'ad liberaciones ipsius regis' (in this case presumably meaning wages), makes it seem unlikely that *victus* should be translated as 'wages'.¹⁴ It is surely more likely that it should be understood in the more general sense of 'board and lodging'; as, indeed, the word itself implies.

The Treaty of Dover does show that men who could provide the king with major military support, such as Count Robert, could expect to be retained by the payment of a money fief. But whether the ordinary knight, homegrown or a foreigner, was retained in the household in a similar fashion is much more doubtful. Furthermore, the thesis that Henry I 'normally' paid campaign wages to his household knights is also questionable. Some knights probably did serve in the royal armies in return for stipends. It is unlikely, however, that wages or money fiefs played a significant role in paying for the services of the majority of Henry I's household knights. The evidence from King John's reign adds considerable weight to the hypothesis that the rewards of knightly service in the royal households of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were based upon means other than the payment of money fiefs and wages. But since the term money fief is controversial, before we embark upon the analysis of the material from this reign, we must begin by describing what a money fief was.

¹¹ The text is reproduced in *Diplomatic Documents*, i, no. 1.

¹² *Diplomatic Documents*, i, p. 2.

¹³ J. O. Prestwich, 'Military household', pp. 8-9.

¹⁴ *Diplomatic Documents*, i, no. 11.

The Household Knights of King John

In John's reign a money fief, invariably rendered simply as *feodum*, was an annual sum of money allotted to an individual paid from either the exchequer or the chamber. How long each fief was to last and what services were expected in return remain, to a large extent, matters of conjecture. Although Bryce Lyon managed to identify nearly 300 money fiefs during John's reign, few orders for the commencement of such payments by either exchequer or chamber survive.¹⁵ Where the terms are known, they vary considerably in their detail. For example, the 500 mark money fief conceded to the count of Holland and his heirs in March 1213, payable from the exchequer at each Easter, was quite detailed in its requirements. The count swore to stand ready to support John if England were invaded 'cum toto posse meo quamcicus potero . . . postquam summonicionem suam habuerim vel necessitatem suam audierim ad defendendam terram suam'. In return, John was obliged to find the cost of transportation and the necessary pay for these men.¹⁶ The details of another agreement by John to pay a money fief were much less specific. In July 1216, John promised to retain Thomas Malesmains as one of his bachelors and pay him £60 a year from the chamber 'quousque assignauerimus ei LX^{ta} libratas terre . . . de terris inimicorum nostrorum . . . quod nobis serierit'.¹⁷

The terms of these two agreements illustrate two very different ways by which a money fief could be held. In the one, the money fief was hereditary and required specified services on demand; in the other, the money fief was to be held until it could be exchanged for land of an equivalent value and required the unspecified services of a member of the royal household. It cannot be assumed, as Lyon does, that money fiefs were usually given 'in return for . . . feudal service'. Nor can it be assumed that the recipient was paid 'daily wages' over and above the money fief while he was performing his duties. Indeed, it is not even possible to show that the fief was used simply to retain the individual concerned, as Lyon suggests, rather than to finance the burdens that went with the fief.¹⁸ Although the arrangement with the count of Holland stipulated that those knights who came to England would serve 'ad liberationes ipsius regis', other agreements made no such mention of wages. In fact, the evidence of actual payment from John's reign suggests that those in receipt of money fiefs received these moneys when they appeared for service, and that in addition they received gifts, described as *dona*, and money for purchasing horses, presumably

¹⁵ B. D. Lyon, 'The money fief under the English kings, 1066-1485', *EHR*, 66 (1951), p. 182.

¹⁶ *Diplomatic Documents*, i, no. 11.

¹⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 190 b-191.

¹⁸ Lyon, 'Money fief', pp. 162, 186-7.

replacements for those lost during royal service.¹⁹ In general terms, then, money fiefs were specific annual monetary payments allotted to certain individuals, to which were attached a variety of rights and obligations.

The presumption that John paid money fiefs to those knights permanently retained in his household is not easy to accept when the evidence is examined in detail. Of John's hundred-or-so household knights,²⁰ only eleven demonstrably received money fiefs. More pertinently, of these eleven household knights, nine can be identified as foreigners, precisely the sort of men we might expect to want their rewards in cash.²¹ Only one English household knight was recorded as being in receipt of a money fief. On 15 August 1215, Roger of Clifford, second son of the Herefordshire baron Walter of Clifford, was granted a 60 mark annual fief at the exchequer to be paid in two equal instalments at Michaelmas and Easter.²² Quite why Roger was given a money fief when others were not is difficult to explain. One might speculate, though, that the grant was a consequence of the circumstances of the civil war rather than an expression of the routine of John's reign. On 14 August 1215, the day before this money fief was conceded, Roger's elder brother, Walter, had been given the custody of the county and castle of Hereford.²³ Since the brothers remained important royalist supporters in the marcher territories throughout the civil war, it seems reasonable to suppose that the two grants were connected.²⁴

There is some evidence to suggest that there once existed at the exchequer a roll on which the orders to pay money fiefs were recorded, but this is now lost. In October 1200, for example, the king ordered the

¹⁹ Cf. for example *Docs. of English History*, pp. 235, 238, 240–2; and *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 185, 207, 223, where imprests were made 'super feoda sua'.

²⁰ Church, 'A question of numbers', pp. 151–65.

²¹ Of the nine 'foreigners', seven were called 'knights of Flanders' in the sources. They were: Bernard de Balliol, 20 marks p.a. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 93 b; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 140, 181, 195, 208, 224); Walter de Bailliolet, £35 p.a. (*Rot. Lib. John*, p. 4; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 353); Everard de la Beuvrière, 50 marks p.a. and Walo de Cotes, £30 p.a. (*Rot. Lib. John*, p. 3), though these money fiefs were quickly exchanged for land (*ibid.*, p. 4); Guy de Fressenville received 2 marks against his fee in Ireland as did Eustace de Eis (*ibid.*, p. 224); Adam de St-Martin, £25 p.a. (*ibid.*, pp. 119, 165; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 119, 125 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, 241). Of the other two 'foreigners', one was a Poitevin, Joldwin de Doe, who may not have been a household knight when he received his money fief from the Angevin exchequer in 1200 (*Rot. Norm.*, p. 29), and the other a Norman, Thomas Malesmains, who was given a money fief valued at £60 p.a. in August 1215 (*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 190 b–191). The final household knight to receive a money fief was Engelram de Gentele, who received 20 marks p.a. in 1215, but unfortunately his origins are obscure (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 183 b, 193).

²² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 225 b.

²³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 153.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 159 b (2), 162; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 263, 278, 279, 282, 282 b; *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 223 b (2), 224; *Ancient Correspondence Wales*, no. 1.

exchequer officials 'inrotulari in rotulo nostro de feodis' the 60 mark money fief that Eustace de Neville, who was not a household knight, was to receive.²⁵ This roll was presumably designed to act as a reminder to the exchequer officials to issue these payments at the allotted times during the year, and its loss is regrettable. The likelihood is, however, that this roll did not contain the names of large numbers of household knights who were to receive money fiefs, since the orders to enrol such money fiefs onto this *rotulus de feodis* would have survived in the close rolls. Neither is it possible to argue that the size of any money fiefs payable to household knights would be well known to the king's officials, and so were not recorded. Evidence from Henry III's reign, when the king did begin to pay money fiefs to his household knights, demonstrates that the amounts paid were varied enough to require written records.²⁶

The likelihood that John did not normally retain his household knights by the use of money fiefs is strengthened by an examination of the detail of the annual payments conceded to three of the foreigners who joined the royal household. On 20 October 1200, Geoffrey fitz Peter initiated an order to the king's treasurer and chamberlains requiring them to pay a quarter part of the 50 mark money fief and a similar amount of the £30 money fief that Everard de la Beuvrière and Walo de Cotes had at the exchequer until they had land of an equivalent sum assigned to them.²⁷ The same day, the sheriff of Gloucester was ordered to hand over land in Lower Slaughter to the value of 50 marks and £30 to Everard and Walo respectively, and at this point the payment of the money fief was presumably to cease.²⁸ A second example of the concession of a money fief until land to the same value could be found occurs at the end of the reign. In July 1216, John stated that he would retain Thomas Malesmains as one of his bachelors and pay him £60 annually from the chamber until land of the equivalent value could be found for him.²⁹ Both examples indicate that the king's preference, and perhaps the knights' preference too, was for rewards to be given in some form other than money fiefs. Money fiefs had to be paid to those knights of foreign origin who were serving with the king on a short-term basis, since money could be taken home once that service was completed. Those foreigners who chose to remain in royal

²⁵ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 5.

²⁶ Cf. for example BL Cotton Claudius CII, fos 110v–111r, which records the amounts payable to eighty-six of the king's knights ranging from Joldwin de Doe's £100 p.a. to the £5 p.a. of William de Crepping and William de Brion.

²⁷ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 4; cf. *Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 40.

²⁹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 190 b–191.

service on a long-term basis, however, were in a position to receive payments in the form of land. Everard de la Beuvrière and Walo de Cotes both exchanged their money fiefs for land, settled in England, and served John throughout his reign;³⁰ it seems probable that Thomas Malesmains intended to do likewise.³¹ It is difficult not to conclude with Lyon that money fiefs were used primarily to retain men from the continent who could provide John with additional forces during times of crisis.³² John did not habitually retain the bulk of his household knights by this method.

The question of whether it was normal practice for John to pay wages (that is, regular and fixed payments in money while on active service and rendered in the sources as *vadia* or, more commonly, *liberaciones*) to his household knights throughout his reign is more problematic. The well-known case of Geoffrey Luttrell certainly shows that the king resorted to paying wages to his household knights during the campaign in Normandy. On 10 July 1202, whilst in Normandy, Geoffrey was ordered to take his 'liberaciones . . . sicut alii milites de familia nostra recipiunt' at a rate of seven Angevin shillings a day.³³ Another household knight also seems to have been paid wages during this campaign. In February 1203, Walter de Baillouet received from Robert de Veteri Ponte a share of a one-off payment of £30 Angevin towards the quittance of his 'vadia'.³⁴ Since Walter was not listed as being in the household until 1209, however, and so may not have been *de familia regis* until that date, his case is less illuminating.³⁵

From the point at which John lost Normandy until the summer of 1215, when the civil war was in full swing, John seems to have eschewed the practice of paying wages to his household knights. Just three knights received payments that may be equated with wages. The first was Elias de Mareville, who, during the 1210 Irish campaign, received advances described variously as being 'super liberaciones suas' and 'ad extrahenda vadia sua'.³⁶ Elias was clearly on the fringes of the royal household since he was one of ten knights used as bodyguards by

³⁰ A. Warmington, 'Some knights of the household of King John who held estates in Gloucestershire', *Trans. Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 104 (1986), pp. 175–82.

³¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 190 b–191.

³² Lyon, 'Money fief', pp. 182, 186.

³³ *Rot. Norm.*, p. 54. In 1202–3, the rate of exchange between Angevin pounds and Sterling was four to one (*Pipe Roll 5 John*, p. 21). If John were to retain fifty household knights at this daily rate for forty days' service, the cost to the king would be £700 Angevin or £175 Sterling.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80. ³⁵ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 189, 241.

The Household Knights of King John

John on this campaign.³⁷ But it is not certain that he had been actually incepted into the royal *familia* at this point, since he was not listed as a full member until December 1215.³⁸ The second and third household knights to be paid wages during this period were the already mentioned Everard de la Beuvrière and Walo de Cotes, who were given a payment of 72 shillings 'in liberacionibus' for eighteen days' service between 28 April and 15 May 1213.³⁹ But this payment was given to them after they had lost their lands in Lower Slaughter and Westall to the Fleming Baldwin de Haverscark, possessions that had been given by John to Everard and Walo 'ad se sustentandum in servicio nostro'.⁴⁰ It seems reasonable to suppose that John paid *liberaciones* to Everard and Walo because they had lost the land that was given to support them, not because it was normal practice for the king to grant wages to his household knights.

The second period in the reign when John's household knights were probably in receipt of wages was during the civil war. During this period, five household knights were in receipt of wages in circumstances that suggest that John was returning to the practice that he had followed during the defence of Normandy. In June 1215, Gilbert de Sanes was paid his 'liberaciones' for the period between the 4th and 13th of that month.⁴¹ On 20 August 1215, Philip Mark was made quit of the wages he had paid to Eustace de Eis 'sicut facit aliis militibus'.⁴² In December 1215, three household knights received wages. On the 9th, William of Cusack, with two others, received a payment 'ad vadia sua aquietanda' and for their journey to the king.⁴³ On the 30th, the constable of Sauvey, Geoffrey de Serland, was ordered by John to pay the household knights Gilbert de Sanes and Engelram de Furnet their 'liberaciones donec dominus Rex ad partes illas redierit'.⁴⁴ Finally, on 23 July 1216, John conceded to the household knight, Oliver de Buteville, and his brother Geoffrey the lands of the rebel, Walter de Dunstanville, in Castle Combe, Brocton Giffard, and Heytesbury, Wiltshire, 'ad se sustentandum in servicio nostro quamdiu nobis placuerit et volumus quod postquam saisinam inde habuerint quieti simus de liberacionibus suis'.⁴⁵ Though forced by circumstances to pay wages to his household knights during the civil war, John evidently

³⁷ On 5 July, these ten knights were recorded as being duty-bound 'sequi dominum Regem quocumque ierit' (*Rot. Lib. John*, p. 191).

³⁸ Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 16.

³⁹ *Docs. of English History*, p. 264.

⁴⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 231 b.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 214–214 b.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 226 b.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

still wished to reward them in ways that did not involve monetary payments.

The evidence points towards the conclusion that it was only under extraordinary circumstances that John resorted to the expedient of dispensing wages to his household knights, and that under ordinary circumstances John preferred to reward and sustain his knights in other ways. This view is reinforced by material relating to the campaigning activities of the king during the major part of his reign. For example, during the short-lived Scottish campaign that John undertook in the summer of 1209, the surviving mise roll shows that the king preferred to dispense gifts, rather than wages, to alleviate the burden of the campaign for his household knights.⁴⁶ The evidence provided by the surviving *prestita* roll from John's twelfth regnal year points in a similar direction. This roll provides unparalleled material for the make-up and operation of one of John's armies.⁴⁷ On this campaign John brought with him a contingent of some forty-five household knights.⁴⁸ These household knights, like the generality of knights on the campaign, were given *prests* designed to offset some of the cost of an overseas campaign and which the king seems not to have expected them to repay. The much less detailed material for the campaign of 1214 in Poitou also implies that John gave *prests* to his household knights in order to help them defray the cost of going to Poitou.⁴⁹

As with the case of money fiefs, there are references to a roll of *liberaciones* that has not survived. On the three occasions that the roll is mentioned, however, the entries indicate that such payments were made to the lower echelons of men in the king's service. The first two references involved Aymer de Berbeville,⁵⁰ who was elsewhere described as a sergeant.⁵¹ The third reference involved a certain Robert 'Pischator', who was presumably employed by John in the capacity that his name suggests.⁵² There are other references to *liberaciones* being paid to unnamed individuals, such as in Ireland during the summer of 1210 when Henry de Ver took responsibility for the payment of wages to the sergeants and crossbowmen.⁵³ Despite the loss of this roll of *liberaciones*, it is unlikely that the *rotulus de liberacionibus* contained lists of household knights who were to receive such payments. One cannot help but

⁴⁶ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 125-6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-229. For the nature of *prests* and a full discussion of the campaign see Church, 'The 1210 campaign in Ireland', and also *Pipe Roll 17 John*, pp. 79-80.

⁴⁸ Church, 'A question of numbers', pp. 153-4.

⁴⁹ *Pipe Roll 16 John*, pp. 9, 136, 137, 139.

⁵⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 233, 235.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-3, 176, 179, 181, 187, 188, 194, 208-9.

conclude that status determined the nature of any monetary payments that John made during periods of campaigning activity. Lesser men, such as sergeants, crossbowmen and, where there was a prior arrangement, foreign knights, received wages; greater men, such as knights, both those within and without the household, received *prests* and *dona*.

Both the beginning and end of John's reign presented the king with crises that demanded flexibility as regards to the payments that knights received. Holt, for example, has suggested that John responded to the problems of keeping his forces in the field during the defence of Normandy by inventing the system of *prests*.⁵⁴ For a similar reason John resorted to the payment of wages to his household knights. Equally, the circumstances at the end of the reign demanded drastic measures to keep the royal forces in the field. Neither of these episodes could be described as typical. In addition to *prests* and *dona*, John's knights received one-off monetary payments when they undertook specific duties away from court. For example, Thomas of Erdington, Adam de St-Martin and Godfrey of Crowcombe received £100 for taking passage to the papal curia in February 1210.⁵⁵ The size of this payment probably had as much to do with the cost of procuring an audience with the right people at Rome as with paying the expenses of these knights. Walter de Baillolet received payments for duties outside the court on many occasions during the reign.⁵⁶ Robert of Ropsley and Robert of Burgate received money for going to the Emperor Otto IV in May 1215.⁵⁷ Gilbert of Kentwell, William Houdri, and Ralph fitz Nicholas each received 100 shillings when they went on the king's business to Poitou in 1210.⁵⁸

It is probable that John also supported his knights when they were actually in his service at court, though the evidence for such payments has not survived. The *Constitutio Domus Regis* of the 1130s,⁵⁹ which lists the allowances made in money and food to a small number of officers engaged in Henry I's *domus*, and the Household Ordinance of 1279,⁶⁰ which similarly lists the allowances that Edward I's officers were to receive, together suggest that John paid certain individuals in his household. Household knights such as Thomas le Bret, Thomas Sturmy, and Geoffrey Luttrell, men who spent part of their careers in John's buttery, may well have received payments in money and food in return for their

⁵⁴ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 80. ⁵⁵ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 151.

⁵⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 76, 79 b, 96 b; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 90 b; *Docs. of English History*, pp. 238, 242, 250, 256; *Pipe Rolls 9 John*, p. 30 (2); *11 John*, p. 10.

⁵⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 137 b. ⁵⁸ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 150.

⁵⁹ *Dialogus de Scaccario*, pp. 129–35.

⁶⁰ Tout, *Chapters*, ii, pp. 158–63.

services in this regard. Perhaps Godfrey of Crowcombe, at one point described by John as 'our marshal', also received monetary allowances and food whilst discharging his household duties.⁶¹ But any such allowances given to these men would have been granted in consequence of their specific domestic responsibilities, and designed to support them in their activities at court.

John also dispensed robes to his household knights. Though little remains in the way of evidence for individual grants of robes, the king was renowned for his generosity in this regard. The author of the *Histoire des Ducs de Normandie*, for example, states that John was always surrounded by a large number of knights to whom he gave many robes.⁶² Roger of Wendover mentioned that at the Christmas feasts held at Guildford in 1200 and at Windsor in 1207 John 'multa militibus suis festiva distribuit indumenta'.⁶³ The cost of the robes for the celebrations in 1207, lends credence to Wendover's words. The archdeacon of Huntingdon, William of Cornhill, expended £492 1s 11d to buy 641 lengths of scarlet and diverse cloth dyes in order to make the robes for this feast.⁶⁴ Robe giving was an important act of lordship to the king: it was the means by which he could display his preeminent position within society. Equally, this act was important to the king's retainers as a symbol of their lord's benevolence. The monetary value of individual robes, however, must have been relatively small. For example, in 1167, the young William Marshal lost his war-horse during an engagement at Neufchâtel-en-Bray. As an important lesson in the economics of warfare, William's lord refused to replace the beast, and the Marshal was forced to pawn his best robes. Nevertheless, even his best robes could raise only enough cash for the purchase of a simple baggage horse, which was hardly good enough for William to ply his chosen trade.⁶⁵ Symbolically important though robes were, they did not form part of the profits of royal service.

Evidently, money played an insignificant role in the way John rewarded his household knights. The exception to this principle seems to have been the foreigners retained in the household, though even some of these men were prepared to exchange their money fiefs for landed forms of reward. Nor did John, under normal circumstances, dispense

⁶¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 114. ⁶² *Normandie*, p. 105.

⁶³ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 475, 520. ⁶⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 106.

⁶⁵ *Maréchal*, lines 1190–200; cf. R. Allen Brown, 'The status of the Norman knight', pp. 300–2, who gives a typically bellicose assessment of the financial cost of being a knight. He points out that a fighting knight would need at least two war-horses for any engagement, including a tournament, in order that one might be rested while the other was being used in combat.

wages to his household knights whilst they were on campaign. Even under extraordinary circumstances, such as the civil war, John still wished to relieve himself of the burden of monetary payments, both in the form of money fiefs and wages. Apart from robes, allowances whilst performing special duties for the king, and presumably sustenance when in attendance at the king's court, the permanent core of household knights received no immediate remuneration for their services. What these men received was the king's hospitality: they were *de hospicio regis*, a term sometimes used instead of the more usual *de familia regis* to denote a household knight.⁶⁶ During periods of campaigning activity, royal knights might be given monetary gifts, or *prests*, in order to sustain them. But these payments were made on an *ad hoc* basis, and did not constitute the real rewards of royal service.

The rewards that the overwhelming majority of John's household knights received were based upon the opportunity to benefit from royal patronage. The king controlled a huge fund of wardships, marriages to heiresses and widows, grants of escheated land and royal demesne. He dispensed lucrative offices, such as those of sheriff, constable, and custodian of confiscated lands. The king also rewarded his family, allies, supporters, and followers with these prerogatives. Scott Waugh, for example, has shown that during the period 1217 to 1327, English kings could expect to gain access to around a dozen wardships a year, two of which would be of baronial size. Of these dozen or so wardships, almost two-thirds would involve heirs below the age of consent, thus, providing that the heir had not already been betrothed, giving the king the right of marriage.⁶⁷ Proximity to the king was essential if a man were to lobby successfully for a share of these riches, and John's household knights were ideally placed to gain these rewards.

The acquisition of an heiress was something to which many of John's knights might reasonably aspire. During 1203, for example, Geoffrey Luttrell acquired Frethesant, daughter and co-heir of the Yorkshire baron, William Painei.⁶⁸ This brought to Geoffrey half the Painei barony in Hooton Painei, Yorkshire, valued at seven and a half knights' fees,⁶⁹ to which he later added another knight's fee from the original

⁶⁶ Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 16.

⁶⁷ Waugh, *Lordship of England*, p. 146.

⁶⁸ *Early Yorks. Charters*, iv, p. 44. For the Painei family cf. T. Stapleton, 'Historical details of the ancient religious community of secular canons in York prior to the conquest of England . . . with biographical notices of the founder, Ralph Paynell, and his descendants', in *Memoirs Illustrative of the History and Antiquaries of the County and City of York* (London, 1847), pp. 24–5, 45–6, 89–90, 118–30, and further, H. Maxwell-Lyte, 'Dunster and its lords', part 2, *Archaeological Journal*, 37 (1880), pp. 155–8.

⁶⁹ *Red Book*, p. 490.

Painel barony in Barton-le-Street.⁷⁰ The cost to Geoffrey of acquiring this barony was 40 marks and his agreement to answer for a share of William Painel's debts at the exchequer amounting to some £71 18s 3d.⁷¹ These debts remained outstanding on the exchequer rolls for the remainder of the reign.⁷² Sometime before Michaelmas 1202, Hugh Malebisse, another household knight, was given Beatrice, daughter and heir of Wimar fitz Warner of the hereditary stewards of Richmond. With this marriage, excluding the third of Wimar's lands that comprised the dower of his widow, Helewise, Hugh gained control of Wensley and Ellerton-on-Swale, Yorkshire, and Wicken and Fordham, Cambridgeshire.⁷³

Widows also comprised a significant proportion of the women whom John's household knights acquired in marriage. The household knight and later king's steward, Brian de Lisle, was given Grace, daughter and heir of Thomas fitz William of Saleby, Lincolnshire, and widow of Adam de Neville in January 1205. This brought to Brian Grace's inheritance in Cuxwold, Saleby, East Rasen, Casthorpe, Tothby, Hainton, Barkwith, Strubby, and Dunham, Lincolnshire,⁷⁴ and her dower lands in Berkshire.⁷⁵ In 1211, Robert of Burgate proffered 700 marks to have Gallena, widow of John Brewer and daughter and heir of William de Dammartin, with her inheritance.⁷⁶ This marriage brought to Robert lands in Mendlesham, Suffolk, in Norton Mandeville, Essex, and other lands in the fee of William Brewer.⁷⁷ Roger of Clifford, younger son of the baron Walter de Clifford, was given in marriage Sibyl de Ewais, widow of Robert de Tresgoz, after his father had proffered 1,000 marks in 1214.⁷⁸ Through Sibyl, Roger acquired £10 of land in Bakinton hundred, Wiltshire,⁷⁹ land from the fee of Robert de Ewais in Herefordshire,⁸⁰ land in Somerset,⁸¹ and the manor of Tenbury, Worcestershire.⁸²

In total, out of the sixty-two knights who made more than one

⁷⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 48 b; *Red Book*, p. 491; *VCH Yorks., North Riding*, i, p. 472.

⁷¹ *Pipe Roll 5 John*, pp. 201 (3), 202, 203, 206, 211.

⁷² *Pipe Roll 13 John*, pp. 45, 46 (3), 47 (2), these debts were combined in 1212 and, after his death in 1216x17, passed on to Geoffrey's heir (*Pipe Rolls 14 John*, p. 29 (2); 2 *Henry III*, p. 87).

⁷³ *Early Yorks. Charters*, v, p. 25.

⁷⁴ *Book of Fees*, pp. 362, 1,003, 1,017, 1,034, 1,059, 1,062, 1,066.

⁷⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 17 b; Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees*, ii, pp. 85, 151–2.

⁷⁶ *Book of Fees*, p. 138; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 130 b.

⁷⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 162 b; *ibid.*, ii, p. 109; *Book of Fees*, p. 138; *VCH Essex*, iv, p. 151.

⁷⁸ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 528.

⁷⁹ *Book of Fees*, p. 380.

⁸⁰ *Pipe Rolls 3 Henry III*, p. 167; 4 *Henry III*, pp. 195, 196.

⁸¹ *Book of Fees*, pp. 428, 430; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 8.

⁸² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 559; land that totalled some nineteen knights' fees (Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 43).

appearance in the household before the crisis of the civil war, twenty-six obtained brides who brought them considerable economic reward.⁸³ It is quite possible, however, that this number underrepresents the true extent to which John used this form of patronage.⁸⁴ For example, Everard de la Beuvrière had a son and heir in 1220, but the name of his wife and the lands that she may have brought with her to the marriage are not recorded.⁸⁵

Besides beneficial marriages, the king could dispense patronage to his household knights by the grant of wardships, which were potentially very lucrative.⁸⁶ If marriage rights accompanied the grant, the recipient could marry the heir himself or pass the heir onto one of his children, a family member, or one of his own followers. Originally given as patronage by the king, John's knights could in turn use the wardship to form their own patronage networks. Even if marriage rights did not accompany the grant, the recipient still had much to gain. Since

⁸³ Household knights, other than those mentioned in the text, who acquired brides were: Robert Barat, the widow of Thomas de Ria (*Pipe Roll 10 John*, p. 89); Robert de Beauchamp, Johanna de Coleville, co-heiress of Alice de Coleville (*VCH Berks.*, iv, p. 248; *Two Beauchamp Registers*, p. 59); William de Courtenay married an Ada (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 184 b); Godfrey of Crowcombe, Alice, daughter and co-heir of William de Corneilles (Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 87); Thomas Sturmy, Lucia, widow of Hugh de Montviron (*Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, pp. 22, 37); William de Lande, Johanna, widow of Thomas Darcy (*Rot. Fin.*, p. 349; *Pipe Roll 8 John*, p. 102); Henry de Longchamp, Matilda, sister of William de Cantilupe, the king's seneschal (*Pipe Roll 13 John*, pp. 253–4); William de Gamaches, Elizabeth de Miners (*Book of Fees*, p. 1,270; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 345; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 4); Alan de Dunstanville was married to an Isabella (*Curia Regis Rolls*, xv, no. 1372); Thomas Malesmains married a Johanna (*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 195 b); Thomas Peverel, Agnes, possibly the widow of Roger Cainell (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 554; *Curia Regis Rolls*, xi, no. 1,710); Alberic de Marines, Eleanor, daughter and heir of Robert of Buxted (*Curia Regis Rolls*, i, p. 78); Henry IV de la Pomeroy, Johanna, daughter of Reginald de Vautort (Powley, *The House of De La Pomerai*, p. 29); John Russell, Rohesia de la Pomeroy, daughter of Thomas Bardulf and widow of Henry II de la Pomeroy (*Curia Regis Rolls*, i, p. 240; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 43); Geoffrey de Serland, a Matilda (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 243 b); Ralph de Trumbleville, Alice, daughter of Nichola de Hemmingford and widow of Philip fitz Robert (*Book of Fees*, p. 279; *Curia Regis Rolls*, i, p. 413); Robert of Ropsley, Mabel de Limsey, daughter of Gerard de Limsey and widow of Hugh Bardulf (*Curia Regis Rolls*, iv, pp. 244, 304; *Pipe Rolls 7 John*, p. 34; *10 John*, p. 33; *2 Henry III*, p. 51; *Curia Regis Rolls*, vi, pp. 168, 205); John of Bassingbourn, an Albreda (*Curia Regis Rolls*, ii, p. 306); William des Préaux, Philippa, heir of Coleby (Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, p. 342); Richard le Waleys, Matilda de Lanvalay, daughter and heir of Ralph de Lanvalay (*Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 202; *Book of Fees*, pp. 106–7); Walter de Verdun, Annora Belet, daughter of Michael Belet, butler of Henry II (Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees*, iii, p. 320; *VCH Oxon.*, ix, p. 4).

⁸⁴ Waugh has argued that John took an active interest in the marriages of both wards and widows since these royal prerogatives were a central tool in a king's use of his patronage (*Lordship of England*, pp. 89, 157–60, 180–90). Where a household knight married a widow or a ward, therefore, it seems certain that this marriage was received from the king as a deliberate act of patronage.

⁸⁵ *Curia Regis Rolls*, ix, p. 379.

⁸⁶ Waugh believes that: 'The king usually allocated most of his feudal patronage to those who served him and did not routinely honor magnates with grants of wardships' (*Lordship of England*, p. 189).

wardships of male heirs lasted on average eleven years, there was usually more than enough time to take a sizeable profit from the land.⁸⁷ And these profits were not always legitimate. In January 1214, for example, Eustace de Eis acquired wardship of Jordan of Tuke's heir.⁸⁸ In the following May, Eustace handed the wardship onto William de Verdun, but not before he had removed the chattels from the heir's lands.⁸⁹ As chapters 4 and 5 of Magna Carta suggest, such abuses must have been common.

Robert Peverel was one household knight who seems to have done very well from this kind of reward. In 1211, Robert pledged 60 marks and a palfrey for custody of the late Roger Cainel's lands. In addition Roger acquired marriage rights over Cainel's heir and his widow, Agnes who he then gave to his brother, Thomas.⁹⁰ That same year Robert fined in 20 marks and a palfrey for custody and marriage rights over the son and heir of John de Jarpenville 'ad opus filie sue'.⁹¹ This particular wardship gave Robert control over two knights' fees in Totham, Essex, and two fees in Garboldisham, Wellingham, and Lanford, Norfolk.⁹² By 1212, Robert held custody over the widow and lands of the late Drogo de Verdun.⁹³ In 1214, he was ordered to give up the custody of Johanna, widow of John de Hay, to Ivo fitz Ascelin of the king's wardrobe.⁹⁴ Other household knights also received rich wardships. For example, in 1215 John Russell acquired the wardship with marriage rights over the daughter and co-heir of James de Neufmarché.⁹⁵ John gave his ward in marriage to his son, Ralph Russell, which brought to the Russell family nearly seventeen knights' fees in Gloucestershire, Somerset, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire.⁹⁶ In 1211, Geoffrey Luttrell took custody of the second half of the Paine barony with which he acquired the wardship of Johanna, daughter and heir of Isabella, Frethesant's sister and co-heir to the barony, and William Bastard.⁹⁷ John of Bassingbourne also received substantial wardships. In July 1207, he was given custody and marriage rights over the son and heir of Bartholomew de Brinson 'ad opus filie sue'.⁹⁸ This wardship gave John control of Brinson's estates in West Thurrock, Essex, which he held at least until

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 146.

⁸⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 161 b.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 206.

⁹⁰ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 64.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 123.

⁹² *Book of Fees*, p. 1465.

⁹³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 124 b.

⁹⁴ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 518.

⁹⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 234 b, 237 b.

⁹⁶ *Book of Fees*, pp. 20, 38, 39, 50, 79, 80, 85, 262, 381, 439, 442, 861, 875; *Pipe Rolls 2 Henry III*, p. 42 (2); 3 *Henry III*, p. 161; J. H. Round, 'The origins of the Russells', in his *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (London, 1901), pp. 258-9.

⁹⁷ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, pp. 31, 32; cf. *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, p. 280; *Red Book*, p. 490.

⁹⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 41.

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1214.⁹⁹ In the same month, John also received custody and marriage rights over William, son and heir of Ralph de Mara, giving him control of lands in Lincolnshire and Cumberland.¹⁰⁰ It seems likely that John kept control over the Mara lands for two generations, since in 1215 he had custody of William's lands and heir.¹⁰¹ Altogether, during the course of the reign, some twenty-eight wardships went to sixteen knights.¹⁰² When the totals of marriages and wardships are combined they show that thirty-one individual household knights, half of those who made more than one appearance in royal service before the civil war, and a third of the total number of household knights, received these lucrative forms of reward.

In addition to these crown rights, John had a store of royal demesne and confiscated lands with which to reward his household knights. In the records, fifteen household knights received grants of royal demesne during the reign. For example, Robert Barat, with his half-brother William de Cantilupe, held Great Coxwell, Berkshire, between 1201 and 1205, when it was given to the abbot and convent of John's new Cistercian foundation of Beaulieu.¹⁰³ Everard de la Beuvrière and Walo de Cotes acquired the royal manors of Lower Slaughter and Westall, Gloucestershire, in 1200.¹⁰⁴ Apart from a brief interlude between 1213 and 1216, when they lost these manors to the Fleming Baldwin de

⁹⁹ *Book of Fees*, pp. 122, 277; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 91 b; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 53; *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, p. 135; *VCH Essex*, vii, pp. 59, 66; J. H. Round, 'The Thurrocks', *Trans. Essex Archaeological Society*, new series, 20 (Colchester, 1933), pp. 41–6.

¹⁰⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 42; *Rot. Chart.*, p. 156; *Curia Regis Rolls*, iv, p. 60.

¹⁰¹ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 105; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 19.

¹⁰² Other household knights who acquired wardships were: Walter de Baillolet, the heirs of Geoffrey de St-Martin (*Red Book*, p. 618; *Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 216; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 176; *Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 184) and Richard Ridel, whom he married to his daughter (*Rot. Lib. John*, p. 59; *Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 216; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 516); Robert Barat, the widows of Thomas de Ria (*Pipe Roll 10 John*, p. 89) and Walter Walerand (*Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 81); Everard de la Beuvrière, Isolde Pantolf, widow of Walter de Baskerville (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 286 b); Thomas le Bret, the heir of Richard Balistarius (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 189); Robert of Burgate, the widow of Walter Carrow (*Pipe Rolls 9 John*, p. 125; *10 John*, p. 14) and later also Walter's heir (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 114; *Book of Fees*, pp. 25, 26); Godfrey of Crowcombe, Alice, daughter and co-heir of William de Cormeilles (*Book of Fees*, p. 100); Eustace de Eis, the heir of Jordan of Tuke (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 161 b); Thomas Sturmy, the heir of Walter Sturmy (*Pipe Roll 14 John*, p. 60; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 166 b); Henry de Longchamp, the heir of Stephen de Beauchamp (*Rot. Fin.*, p. 15; Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees*, i, p. 49); Geoffrey Luttrell, in addition to the daughter and heir of William Bastard, the daughter and heir of Hugh de Tuit (*Rot. Fin.*, p. 552); Robert of Ropsley, wardship of the barony of Limesy (*Book of Fees*, p. 123); John Russell, in addition to a daughter and co-heir of James de Neufmarché, the heir of Thomas fitz Henry (*Rot. Fin.*, pp. 566, 600, 603); Ralph de Trubleville, the heirs of Roger de Scales (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 217) and Geoffrey of Denton (*Curia Regis Rolls*, iii, pp. 47, 86); and Richard le Waleys, the heirs of Hoel and Jordon (*Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 161).

¹⁰³ *Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 201; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 147; *Book of Fees*, pp. 300, 866; *Monasticum Anglicanum*, v, p. 683.

¹⁰⁴ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 4; *Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 40; *Book of Fees*, p. 51.

Haverscark,¹⁰⁵ they retained these holdings until their deaths, after which they were given to another royal servant, Thomas Basset.¹⁰⁶ Evidently, royal lands also made an important source of rewards for many of John's household knights.¹⁰⁷

More significant in this regard were the grants of escheated lands that John made. Over the course of his reign, forty-six individual knights became the recipients of lands that had escheated to the crown. Most of these grants were conceded during the course of the civil war, presumably reflecting the increased availability of such land. During this period, thirty-eight of John's knights acquired some seventy-one grants of such land, and several did especially well.¹⁰⁸ For example, Adam and

¹⁰⁵ *Docs. of English History*, p. 264; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 231 b, 263 b, 393 b.

¹⁰⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 485.

¹⁰⁷ Household knights, other than those mentioned in the text, who received grants of royal demesne were: William de Gamaches, the manors of Dymock, Glos., with Meon, Hants (*Pipe Roll 9 Richard I*, p. 121; *Book of Fees*, pp. 51, 439; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 282 b; *Pipe Roll 5 Henry III*, p. 233) and Tatenhall, Staffs. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 56; *Rot. Chart.*, p. 152 b; *Pipe Rolls 9 John*, p. 7; *5 Henry III*, pp. 139, 141; *Book of Fees*, pp. 143, 384); Geoffrey Luttrell, the manors of Croxton, Lancs. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 14, 61; *Book of Fees*, pp. 223, 226; *Red Book*, p. 569; *Pipe Rolls 7 John*, p. 176; *16 John*, p. 55) and Rothley, Leics. (*Pipe Rolls 1 John*, p. 245; *10 John*, p. 159; *17 John*, p. 28); Luke de Trumbleville, initially with his brother Ralph, the manor of Kineton, War. (*Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 245; *Rot. Curia Regis*, ii, p. 158; *Pipe Roll 2 John*, p. 175, 176; *Book of Fees*, pp. 54, 376; *Red Book*, p. 550; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 319 b; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 50); Richard le Waleys, the manors of Winterbourne, Glos. (*Pipe Roll 8 John*, p. 9), Upper Lambourn, Berks. (*Pipe Roll 1 John*, pp. 255, 256), and Eastbury, Berks. (*Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 199; *Book of Fees*, pp. 106–7; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, i, p. 857); Henry IV de la Pomeroy, manors of Fordham, Cambs. (*Pipe Roll 9 John*, p. 102), and Roseworthy, Cornwall (*ibid.*, p. 74); John of Bassingbourne, the manors of Essendon and Bayford, Herts. (*Pipe Roll 16 John*, pp. 1, 6; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, p. 193; *VCH Herts.*, iii, p. 420); William de Revell, father and son, Pitney and Wearne, Soms. (*Rot. Lib. John*, p. 35; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 296 b); William des Préaux, the manor of Alton, Hants (*Rot. Chart.*, p. 220; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 12; *Book of Fees*, p. 257; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 575, 597 b); Robert of Ropsley, briefly the manor of Winterbourne, Glos., in 1204 (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 16) and Barton near Bristol, whilst constable of Bristol castle (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 41 b; *Pipe Roll 10 John*, p. 20); Robert de Beauchamp, briefly the manor of Woodstock, whilst constable of Oxford castle (*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 178 b); and Walter de Verdun, the manor of Bloxham, Oxon. (*Pipe Roll 6 John*, pp. 106, 111; *Memo. Roll 1 John*, p. 55; *Book of Fees*, p. 104; *Pipe Roll 5 Henry III*, p. 180; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 503 b; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, pp. 182, 204; *Cirencester Abbey Cart.*, ii, pp. 539–43; *VCH Oxon.*, ix, p. 60; Carpenter, *Minority of Henry III*, pp. 282–4).

¹⁰⁸ The following household knights were given escheated lands during the civil war: Walter de Baillolet, lands of Eudo Patrick in Kent, Essex, and Wilts. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 232 (2), 233 b), lands of the king's enemies in the bailiwick of the count of St Pol, Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 232 b; cf. *ibid.*, p. 67 b), and lands of Peter of Well, in Well, and Peter de Mara in Eastleigh, Herefords. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 243); Robert Barat, Robert de Ros's demesne manor of Braunston, Northants (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 279 b; cf. *Book of Fees*, p. 1,288); Robert de Beauchamp, land of Roger de Reimfriville in Bucks. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 220), land of William de Clinton in Easton, Bucks. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 235 b), land of William of Eastfield in Eastfield, Oxon. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 251 b); Everard de la Beuvrière, land of Ralph de Saucey in Tormarton and Walter de Lacy in Windrush, Glos. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 288), and with Walo de Cotes, land of Robert Bygot in Gurrington, Devon (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 278); Walo de Cotes, land of John Mautravers in Woodchester, Glos. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 286 b);

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Robert of Burgate, the house of 'Wascheth' in Oxford (*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 131 b) and Simon fitz Walter's manor of Daventry, Northants (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 290 b); Oliver de Buteville with his brother, lands of Walter de Dunstanville in Castle Combe, Brocton Clifford, and Heytesbury, Wilts. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 278), and with Robert Peverel, all the lands of William de Alбини (*Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 165); Roger of Clifford, manor of Hardwelke, Glos. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 263); John de Columpchamp, lands of Bartholomew de la Lee in Beds./Bucks. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 243 b) and lands of John Braelin in Purleigh, Essex (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 253 b); Adam de St-Martin, lands of John de Eyville in Notts., Yorks., and Leics. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 243 b, 249); Godfrey of Crowcombe, land of Henry de Pereburg in Winstone, Glos. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 280), land of Henry fitz Gerold in Wilts., Berks., Bucks., and Notts. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 285), and with Ralph of Raleigh all the lands of the household knight John of Bassingbourne (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 266); Adam Croc and Reginald Croc, lands of William de Lanvalay in Chalk, Kent, Stanway, Essex, Wakeley, Herts., and Wakerley, Northants, and the land of Robert of Ruxley in Ruxley, Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 231 b, 243, 247; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 164 b); Reginald Croc, lands of Oliver de Vallibus in Hants, Norfolk, and Notts. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 252, 253 b, 255 b, 257 b) and those who held in Oliver's fee and who were with the king's enemies (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 274 b); Joldwin de Doe, lands and those rebels who held of the lands of Robert de Crevequer in Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 232, 233, 234 b, 257, 249 b (2)); Luke de Drumare, lands of William de Ros (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 235 b, 239, 252, 253); Reginald de Drumare, Adam le Butler's manor of Wolvercote, Oxon. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 235 b) and John Pincernia's manor of Thornbury, Herefords. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 262); Eustace de Eis, lands of Peter Picot in Notts., Northants, and Essex (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 244, 249 b); Thomas Sturmy, all lands of William de Pontefract in Middlesex, and land in Stepney and Leyton, Essex (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 254, 255 b); Guy de Fressenville, lands of Ralph of Wolvercote in Swinbrook, Bodicote, and Burford, Oxon. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 252, 267); Engelram de Gentele, lands of Peter of Willen in Longwick, Bucks. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 232 b) and land of Robert de Saucey in Northants (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 236 b); William Houdri, land of Guy de la Cuture in Orchardleigh, Soms. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 236); Gilbert of Kentwell, land of Henry de Ver in Honeychild, Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 227 b) and the lands of all enemies of the king who held of his fee in Suffolk and Essex (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 240 b (2)); William de Lande, lands of Roger Lascelles and Henry de Beck in Lincs. (*Memo. Roll to John*, p. 143; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 289 b); Thomas Malesmains, manor of the earl of Gloucester and of Geoffrey de Mandeville in Thornbury, land of Fulk fitz Warin in Alveston, Glos. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 230, 276), and land of Henry de Montfort (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 284, 285); Fulk de Montgomery, lands of Roger of Lenham in Lenham and Huntington, Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 231 b); Ralph fitz Nicholas, land of Eustace of Moreton in the honour of Perche (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 236, 242); Henry de Lorty, land of Ralph of Hastingleigh in Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 230 b) and land of Henry de Braybroc in Northants (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 235); Robert Peverel, land of Robert Marmiun in Berwick, Sussex (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 241 b) and land of William de Gisney in Packworth, Leics. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 251); Thomas Peverel, land of Ralph de Haya in Middleton, Sussex (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 244), land of Robert de Alбини in Wyville, Hungerton, Lincs., and land of Hamo Peche in Corby, Lincs. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 250 b–251); Henry IV de la Pomeroy, land of Roger de Reimes in Devon (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 243 b), all the land of William de Kaynes in Dorset, Soms., and Cornwall (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 244 b), and a knight's fee of the household knight William des Préaux in Cinedon, Devon (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 250 b); William des Préaux, lands of William de Lanvalay and Ralph of Rochester in Herts., Essex, Kent, Northants, Soms., Cambs., and Hunts. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 252, 259 b, 263; *Rot. Chart.*, p. 220); Ralph of Raleigh, land of Roger de Cressy in Kent and Bucks. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 230, 232 b, 247 b), lands of John de Montecute in Oxon., Sussex, and Worcs. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 233), and lands of William de Montecute in Soms. and Dorset (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 252); John Russell, land of Alufi of Boughton in Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 232), lands of Walter of Ashley in Wilts. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 264 b), manor of Bradford, Dorset, of the household knight, Robert Peverel, (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 276 b), and lands of those enemies of the king in the fee of James de Neufmarché (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 281 b); Gilbert de Sanes,

Reginald Croc jointly acquired the lands of William de Lanvalay in Chalk, Kent, in Stanway, Essex, in Wakeley, Hertfordshire, and in Wakerley, Northamptonshire, and the land of Robert of Ruxley in Ruxley, Kent.¹⁰⁹ In addition Reginald was given the lands of Oliver de Vallibus in Hampshire, Norfolk, and Nottinghamshire,¹¹⁰ and the lands of the king's enemies who held in Oliver's fee.¹¹¹ Most of these lands would be returned to their owners on the cessation of hostilities after John's death,¹¹² but there is no reason to suppose that John intended that to happen: the reconciliation was entered into by another administration. Although many of these grants of land must have been given and received more in the hope that a claim could be made at a later date, rather than in the expectation that seisin could be realised immediately, this period represented something of a bonanza for the household knights.

Because of the increased availability of confiscated land, the material from the civil war tends to overemphasise the importance of this form of reward to the household knights. Nevertheless, even before the outbreak of hostilities, these grants of escheats were relatively common. In this period, John gave fourteen of his household knights lands that had escheated to the crown. For example, on 10 May 1203, Robert Barat received authorisation to take the land of Engelram de Monteny in Arques, Normandy, because Engelram had gone over to the king's enemies.¹¹³ The brothers Robert and Thomas Peverel were both given *terrae Normannorum* after 1204, Robert in Alverdiscott, Devon,¹¹⁴ and Thomas in Faccombe and Ellingham, Hampshire.¹¹⁵ Robert also held the escheated manor of Bradford Peverel, Dorset.¹¹⁶ These lands were usually to be held for as long as the king desired. For example, Engelram de Furnet was to hold his land in Jersey 'quamdiu ipse bene nobis servietur',¹¹⁷ and grants of land to be held *quamdiu nobis placuerit* were

land of Geoffrey de Armenters in Leics. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 251); Geoffrey de Serland, lands of Hugh Dastin, Geoffrey de Costentin, and Benedict of Haversham in Bonby, Lincs. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 246), and land of John de Neville in Shorne, Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 278 b); Henry de Trubleville, two fees which enemies of the king held from Warin de Muntchenesy (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 266 b), and lands of Thomas de Thetteborn in Devon, except those held by William Brewer (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 283 b); Walter de Verdun, land of Robert de Champon in Newnham and Norton, Kent (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 229 b–230).

¹⁰⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 231 b, 243, 247; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 164 b.

¹¹⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 252, 253 b, 255 b, 257 b.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 274 b.

¹¹² Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 56–60.

¹¹³ *Rot. Norm.*, p. 93. ¹¹⁴ *Red Book*, p. 559.

¹¹⁵ Ellingham: *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 15 b, 33; Faccombe: *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 93 b, 106 b; *Curia Regis Rolls*, v, pp. 151, 167; *Red Book*, p. 149.

¹¹⁶ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 33 b–34; *Red Book*, p. 546; *Book of Fees*, p. 88.

¹¹⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 104 b.

common. Endowments similar to that conceded to Robert Peverel, who was given Bradford Peverel 'pro se et heredibus suis', were rare.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, like royal demesne, escheated lands were an important source of rewards for a significant minority of John's household knights.¹¹⁹

In addition to these formal rewards, household knights could also expect to benefit from their duties as royal servants. John's knights had access to the high offices of sheriff, castellan, and custodian of bishoprics, abbeys, and lay lands which were temporarily in the hands of the king. These appointments brought both status and, as Holt has shown, considerable profit.¹²⁰ Just as importantly, John's household knights had access to another significant source of patronage: the great magnates who frequented the royal court. The knights' ability to gain access to other patronage networks was based upon their closeness to the king. Some magnates were willing to pay quite heavily to gain the services of someone who could describe himself as *de familia regis*. Thomas Sturmy, for example, served in John's buttery between June 1213 and April 1215, during which time he closely attended the king.¹²¹ As a consequence, Thomas came to the attention of the powerful Worcestershire baron Walter de Beauchamp, who gave him a knight's fee in Rushock, Worcestershire.¹²² In 1216, Thomas actually followed his patron into rebellion.¹²³

'Money', in the words of a writer on the subject of rewards, 'was a

¹¹⁸ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 3

¹¹⁹ Other household knights who were given escheated lands from 1199 to the outbreak of the civil war included: Godfrey of Crowcombe, *terrae Normannorum* in Pinnock and Fordham, Glos. (*Book of Fees*, pp. 51, 618); Engelram de Furnet, land of his brother, Sylvester, in Jersey (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 104 b); William de Gamaches, *terrae Normannorum* in Normandy (*Rot. Norm.*, p. 103) and land of Warin de Glapion in Rutland (*Rot. Lib. John*, p. 66; *Book of Fees*, p. 619); William de Lande, land of William Malet in Coleby, Lincs. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 13 b); Geoffrey Luttrell, *terrae Normannorum* in Barton-le-Street, Yorks. (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 48 b), and land in Croxton, Lincs., of William of St Albans (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 61; *Pipe Roll 11 John*, p. 103); Hugh Malebisse, land of Falk fitz Warin in Salops (*Memo. Roll 1 John*, p. 93); Roger de Portis, land of William de Garland in Normandy (*Rot. Norm.*, p. 56), and land of Stephen de Bella Perche in the bailiwick of Costentin (*Rot. Norm.*, p. 57); Ralph of Raleigh, William de Mandeville's manor of Gussage St Michael, Dorset (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 116, 200, 236 b); Robert of Ropsley, manors of Wykes and Donington, Lincs., which Brian Camerarius held from the countess of Brittany (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 1 b; *Book of Fees*, p. 194); Ralph de Trubleville, land of the king's enemy Engeram de Munteny in Normandy (*Rot. Norm.*, p. 95); Luke de Trubleville, land of Robert de Arches in Warwicks (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 92).

¹²⁰ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 229–30.

¹²¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 135 b, 140, 158 b, 159, 196; *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 200, 206 b, 119 b, 201.

¹²² *Book of Fees*, p. 140; *Red Book*, p. 567.

¹²³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 191; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 280 b; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 100.

resource which facilitated service' in the royal *familias* of the twelfth century.¹²⁴ Given the evidence reviewed here, the conclusion of this article needs to be modified. John employed a plurality of methods to retain and reward his household knights; however, money played a relatively insignificant part in this system. The king dispensed *prests* and *dona* during times of campaigning activity; he may well have expected to reimburse his knights for any losses they incurred during these periods. The king also gave one-off payments in money to those sent on his business, though whether these amounts were merely sufficient for the purposes of the mission or enough for the knight to make a profit remains unclear. In addition, John presented his household knights with robes at the great feasts of the Christian calendar, and probably remunerated them in some way for time spent in his court.

The most common forms of reward, however, centred around the opportunity to lobby for access to the rights of the crown. Very nearly two-thirds of John's knights received their reward through grants of marriage, wardship, escheat, and/or royal demesne. Like hunting dogs around the dinner table, the household knights were in an ideal position to pick up the bones from the king who was feasting on his crown rights. John's knights, moreover, enjoyed the opportunities that royal service gave to profit from royal office and to meet the other great magnates of the realm from whom they might receive patronage. These were what constituted the real rewards of royal service and were the main reasons why men were keen to gain entry to the privileged clique of the *milites de familia regis*.

John certainly did retain foreign military support by means of money fiefs, but he did so only to retain them as temporary extensions to the military element in the household. They did not constitute the core of the king's knightly retinue.¹²⁵ Only a small number of foreign knights were retained on the permanent staff within John's household by the use of money fiefs, and even some of these men gave up these payments for rewards based upon land.

One question remains to be addressed. Did John choose to reward his followers with grants based on land or was he forced into this position by the lack of monetary resources? Despite the view that is now emerging amongst economic historians that the early thirteenth century did not see a period of massive inflation, it is still argued that John did suffer economic privations and was unable to raise enough cash 'both because of political opposition and because there was not yet sufficient

¹²⁴ S. D. B. Brown, 'The mercenary and his master', pp. 23–4, 29.

¹²⁵ Church, 'A question of numbers', pp. 159–60.

coin in circulation to allow [the king the option of] raising revenue through sustained taxation.’¹²⁶ Rewards of the nature described here certainly would have relieved the king of the burden of money payments that came from his own purse; the royal coffers were not bottomless, and money saved in this way could be put to other uses. But surely more important was the fact that in dispensing patronage rather than monetary payments, the king both responded to the expectations of society and, since medieval kings usually held most of the trump cards, used that society’s expectations to his own advantage.

Although by granting away his royal rights to his followers the king forwent potential revenue, the benefits that accrued to him far outweighed the negative effects of such a policy. The nature of these rewards meant that royal service accorded considerable economic opportunities, political power, and social status. The knights of the royal household were an essential arm of monarchical governance, and the rewards that the king granted allowed many of these individuals to become part of the established ruling élite. This gave the king a mighty supporting faction within society which was dependent upon him for its prosperity. Moreover, since the loss of the king’s good grace meant the loss of these economic, political, and social privileges, the incentives to be loyal were great. The king held out the carrot of rich rewards for which every household knight might strive. But he also held the stick, for those whom the king made he could also break.¹²⁷ And neither did the king have to give everyone a rich reward. It was enough that some men received great prizes to keep the others loyal and struggling to be the next to drink deeply from the well of the king’s patronage. This king’s household knight might be the next king’s baron, if he were good and extremely lucky. William Marshal, household knight of the young King Henry, baron under kings Richard and John, guardian to the infant Henry III,¹²⁸ and John Russell, household knight under kings John and Henry III, household steward under Henry III and founder of the fortunes of the Russell family, both provide good examples of how a man might prosper in royal service. The tales of brave and

¹²⁶ J. L. Bolton, ‘Inflation, economics and politics in thirteenth-century England’, in *Thirteenth Century England IV: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference, 1991*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 4–6; and see Bolton, ‘The English economy in the early thirteenth century’, in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge, 1999); Paul Latimer, ‘Early thirteenth-century prices’, in *King John: New Interpretations*.

¹²⁷ Cf., for example, the temporary confiscations of the lands and offices of the household knights Brian de Lisle (Holt, *Northerners*, p. 227) and Hugh Malebisse (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 49, 54; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 334; *Pipe Roll 8 John*, p. 208).

¹²⁸ Crouch, *William Marshal*.

adventurous knights were there to inspire all young men from humble origins just entering into a career in the royal household.

By dispensing grants of land, in its various forms, the twelfth- and early thirteenth-century king was taking advantage of the very foundation of medieval society. In this world land, not money, brought real wealth and status. And loyal servants of standing in the household expected to receive landed rewards. This was, after all, one of the main reasons for entering royal service in the first place.¹²⁹ Moreover, in the way that the king dealt with his household knights, he was also using the basic tools of good kingship. Through the judicious use of the patronage at his disposal, the king controlled and influenced those in his service. All medieval kings sought to be effective manipulators of men by employing what Southern has identified as the 'two most powerful of human emotions: fear and hope'.¹³⁰ By offering the opportunity to gain substantial rewards, kings gave their servants hope; by withholding those substantial rewards or even threatening to take those rewards away once given, they employed fear. Just as importantly, by generously rewarding his retainers, the king also gained in status, thus affirming his own power. In a telling comment Roger of Wendover described how at the Christmas feast in 1200, Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, dispensed large numbers of robes to those who attended his celebrations 'because he wished to put himself on a par with the king'. According to Wendover, John was appalled at his archbishop's effrontery. Evidently it was extremely important to the king that he be seen as the most generous lord in the kingdom.¹³¹ But robes were not the only gifts that the king was expected to dispense generously. M. C. Prestwich, for example, has suggested that the crisis of 1297 was in part caused by Edward I's 'parsimonious attitude to patronage'.¹³² Holt has shown how John's refusal to dispense his patronage to those outside the royal orbit contributed to the events of 1215.¹³³

The events of the civil war in John's reign bring into stark relief the central role that patronage played in twelfth- and early thirteenth-century kingship. As we shall see in a later chapter, when John was no longer in a position to dispense patronage, the very basis of his kingship evaporated, and his hitherto loyal servants defected to the barons' side. During the course of the confrontation with his rebels, John lost the

¹²⁹ Southern, 'The place of Henry I', p. 130.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 140. ¹³¹ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 475.

¹³² M. C. Prestwich, 'Royal patronage under Edward I', in *Thirteenth Century England I: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1985*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1986), p. 50.

¹³³ Holt, *Northmers*, p. 218.

support of almost a third of his household knights.¹³⁴ The first wave of defections occurred during the early stages of the civil war.¹³⁵ The household knights who left John up to the end of the summer of 1215 did so because of the ties of neighbourhood and/or lordship. The greatest wave of defections by John's household knights, however, occurred after the arrival of Prince Louis in England in May 1216. But why did John lose so many of his household knights to the rebel cause? Undoubtedly each knight had his own particular reason for leaving the king when he did, but the overall reason for the defections seems to have been that John was no longer in a position to protect, and also enhance, their interests. The methods by which John controlled his household knights had failed. The king could no longer rely on his knights to remain loyal in the expectation of future reward. Although John resorted to paying wages to his household knights during this period, it was not enough to retain their loyalty. The ability to dispense patronage, the very means by which John exercised his power, had been taken away from him by the events of the civil war. Importantly, though, this crisis stemmed not from the policies themselves, for they had been used to great effect by John's forebears;¹³⁶ rather this was a crisis of the king's own making, since it resulted from John's inability to use his patronage wisely.¹³⁷

If John and his twelfth-century antecessors did not use money as the primary tool by which they retained and rewarded their knightly retainers, when did money become important in this regard? The work of M. C. Prestwich on the household of Edward I has demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt that this king employed a fully developed monetary system to retain and reward his household knights. Edward used money fiefs, and he paid wages to his knightly retainers while they were on campaign.¹³⁸ In addition to their annual fees and wages, Edward I's household knights also expected to receive rewards such as marriages, wardships, and lands.¹³⁹ But, importantly, monetary payments constituted the normal means by which Edward paid and retained these men. Evidently, the means by which kings such as John and Henry I retained their *milites de familia* had been modified by the end of

¹³⁴ Compare this with the loyalty exhibited by the household knights of Henry I and Edward I (J. O. Prestwich, 'Military household', p. 4; Southern, 'The place of Henry I', p. 153).

¹³⁵ For a full discussion, see ch. 5.

¹³⁶ Cf. Southern, 'The place of Henry I', pp. 206–33; and also Lally, 'Secular patronage at the court of King Henry II'.

¹³⁷ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 217–50.

¹³⁸ M. C. Prestwich, *War, Politics and Finance*, pp. 42–4; and his *Edward I* (London, 1988) pp. 148–9.

¹³⁹ M. C. Prestwich, 'Royal patronage', pp. 41–52; cf. Waugh, *Lordship of England*, pp. 180–93.

the thirteenth century. This change in emphasis appears to have occurred during the reign of King Henry III.

In recent times, historians have begun to see that a fundamental shift in attitudes occurred in Henry III's reign regarding the use of money to retain royal servants. In 1976, David Carpenter showed that a change in factions at court in 1236 allowed the removal of curial sheriffs and their replacement by local men more amenable to the financial demands of the exchequer. These new sheriffs were initially given allowances, and although these payments were suspended after 1241, the idea that sheriffs should be paid servants of the crown was so powerful that it became part of the platform of the reformers in 1258.¹⁴⁰ More recently Paul Brand has revealed that in the 1230s and 1240s, Henry III's government also dabbled fitfully with the practice of paying wages to royal justices, and that by the 1250s, the majority of Henry's justices were paid 'regular salaries'.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, it was also during the 1240s and 1250s that Henry III increasingly employed money fiefs to retain members of his household.¹⁴² Obviously kings continued to use a variety of methods to reward and retain their household servants throughout the middle ages.¹⁴³ The reign of Henry III, however, appears to mark an important transitional point when the balance between the use of money payments and payments based on land began to move decisively in favour of monetary reward.

¹⁴⁰ Carpenter, 'The decline of the curial sheriff', pp. 17–24.

¹⁴¹ P. Brand, 'Edward I and the transformation of the English judiciary', in his *The Making of the Common Law* (London, 1992), pp. 144–7.

¹⁴² Carpenter, 'Sheriffs of Oxon.', p. 292.

¹⁴³ Waugh, *Lordship of England*, pp. 180–1.

LOYALTY, CIVIL WAR, AND THE HOUSEHOLD KNIGHTS

The reign of King John culminated in near political extinction for the Angevin dynasty when the English barons threatened to depose John in favour of Louis, son and heir of Philip II of France. The reasons for this catastrophic turn of events do not concern us here; rather this chapter seeks to examine the position of John's household knights during this critical phase of Angevin history. Throughout this work I have argued that the royal household knights were an essential arm of Angevin governance, both militarily and politically. How these men reacted to the political circumstances of the day is therefore of utmost importance if we are fully to understand this period in John's reign.

One of the most telling changes to affect the household knights during the civil war was the number of grants of escheated land which they received. As has been alluded to in another chapter, the number of such grants to household knights increased dramatically during this period.¹ In total, thirty-four knights received eighty-four grants of royal escheats during the period October 1214 to October 1216, contrasting markedly with the nineteen knights who received twenty-seven grants of this kind in the period before October 1214. The scale of these grants can be seen from these examples. Between 20 October and 23 December 1215, Walter de Baillolet was given the lands of Eudo Patrick in Kent, half the vill of Maldon, Essex, and the manor of Barford, Wiltshire.² As the bailiff of the count of St Pol, Walter was also given the lands of the count's rebellious tenants.³ In addition, Walter received the lands of Peter of Wells in Wells and Peter de Mara in Eastleigh, Herefordshire, in the fee of Walter de Neville.⁴ Henry de Lorty was given the lands of Ralph of Hastingleigh in Kent and of

¹ See ch. 4

² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 232 (2), 233 b; *Book of Fees*, p. 121.

³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 232 b; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 100.

⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 243.

Henry de Braybroc in the bailiwick of the sheriff of Northamptonshire.⁵ In October 1216, Robert of Burgate was given the manor of Daventry, Northamptonshire, which had been held by Simon fitz Walter.⁶ Robert de Beauchamp was given lands in Buckinghamshire of Roger de Reimfreville and the manor of Easton, which was held by William de Clinton, and in Oxfordshire he was given Eastfield, which had been held by a certain William of Eastfield, and in addition the lands of Robert Arsic.⁷ Everard de la Beuvrière and Walo de Cotes, either together or separately, received lands from the king in Gloucestershire, where they had held the royal manors of Lower Slaughter and Westall since 1203. These lands included the following: Coombe, which was held by Isolde Pantolf, wife of Walter de Baskerville; Tormarton, held by Ralph de Saucey; Windrush, held by Walter de Lacy; and Woodchester, which had been held by John Mautravers.⁸ In addition Walo and Everard received Gurrington, Devon, which had been held by Robert Bygot.⁹ John Russell received the land of the rebel household knight, Robert Peverel, in Bradford, Dorsetshire.¹⁰ John also received the lands of Walter of Ashley in Wiltshire. When in 1215 John obtained one of the daughters and co-heirs of James de Neufmarché, he began to receive the escheated lands of those rebels who held land from the Neufmarché barony.¹¹ Henry IV de la Pomeroy was given the lands of Roger de Reimes in Devonshire, Roger de Kaynes in Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, and Cornwall, and one fee of the household knight William des Préaux Devonshire.¹² Examples of such grants could be multiplied, but these cases will suffice to illustrate the scale of gifts made by John to his household knights.

Some household knights very obviously petitioned for the lands of certain rebels, just as they presumably did so during times of peace. Walter de Balliolet, for example, was the count of St Pol's bailiff and it was presumably as such that he petitioned the king for the lands of those rebels who held of the count. Robert de Beauchamp received escheated lands in Oxfordshire where he was constable of the castle for the sheriff Falkes de Bréauté. Everard de la Beuvrière and Walo de Cotes received most of their escheats from rebels in Gloucestershire, where they had been established by the king early in the reign. John Russell was already established in Dorsetshire when he received Bradford; when he acquired one of the daughters of James de Neufmarché for his son he

⁵ Ibid., pp. 230 b, 235.

⁶ Ibid., p. 290 b.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 220, 235 b, 251 b, 287.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 286 b (2), 288.

⁹ Ibid., p. 278.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 276 b.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 246 b, 281 b; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 54.

¹² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 243 b, 244 b, 250 b.

The Household Knights of King John

began to pick up escheats in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire connected with the Neufmarché barony.¹³ We must presume that these men had special interests in the escheats for which they petitioned which may reflect local rivalries. David Carpenter, for example, has shown the difficulties of reconciliation at the end of the civil war when there were so many competing claims for individual pieces of land.¹⁴

But equally clearly, it appears that John, too, gave some land on what can only be described as a speculative basis. William des Préaux, for example, was given the lands of William de Lanvalay and Ralph of Rochester in Hertfordshire, Essex, Northamptonshire, Somersetshire, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Kent.¹⁵ In this grant the king stated that if the land could not be guaranteed, he would compensate William with land to the value of £300 in Jersey.¹⁶ When the king granted Loughton to Brian de Lisle the grant was to last 'as long as we are able to warrant it to him'.¹⁷ Whether the knights could always take seisin of rebel land granted to them is clearly a matter of some doubt. Not only might a household knight have to oust a reluctant holder from his lands, sometimes in areas where that landholder could rely on the support of his neighbours to prevent this happening, but also household knights would have spent most of their time and energy involved in the conflict. Without the time or the manpower, many of these grants to royal knights must have been given, and received, more in the hope that a claim could be made at a later date, rather than in the expectation that seisin could be realised immediately. The problems that household knights encountered in taking possession of these grants must have been particularly acute towards the end of John's reign when the king was being hard-pressed by the rebel forces.

As has already been suggested, the most remarkable aspect about the grants of rebel lands given to household knights is the sheer quantity of lands dispensed. There are a number of obvious reasons for this trend. The king quite clearly had more land to dispense to his household knights simply because there were so many men in rebellion. Moreover, because so many men were in rebellion there were fewer men to whom the king could dispense this particular aspect of his patronage. But more particularly, the reason for many of the grants to household knights was that John wished to retain the loyalty of his knights. During the civil

¹³ *Red Book*, pp. 461, 484, 488; *Book of Fees*, pp. 92, 342, 1,384.

¹⁴ Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 33–5.

¹⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 252.

¹⁶ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 220; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 259 b, 263; J. H. Le Patourel, *The Medieval Administration of the Channel Islands, 1199–1399* (Oxford, 1937), pp. 27 (and n. 5), 28, 37, 121.

¹⁷ 'quamdiu illud ei warantizare potverimus' (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 219).

war the king's knights would undoubtedly have been his most important officials. John might still value the support of a royal clerk, but what he really needed were knights. Knights were first and foremost fighting men. They were used by the king to carry out other duties, but their major calling was the profession of arms. It was these fighting men whom the king would choose to reward first.

The example of William des Préaux shows clearly that the need to buy loyalty was a major motivating factor behind John's generous dispersal of lands during this period. William was a member of the Norman des Préaux family who had provided John with a particularly fertile ground for the recruitment of royal servants.¹⁸ Before 1204, William had loyally served John, but when John lost Normandy to Philip Augustus, William remained in his homeland.¹⁹ From 1204 until his return to England in October 1215, William's career remains shadowy, but on his appearance in England he immediately took up in royal service once again.²⁰ It seems, however, that William could see a possibility for profit and decided to take advantage of the opportunity provided by the civil war. At the beginning of March 1216, William rebelled and orders were given for his land in Devon to be confiscated.²¹ Two days later, Godfrey of Crowcombe was ordered to release William's men whom he held captive, presumably because William and John had reached some form of agreement.²² It is at this point that we begin to see the price that John was made to pay for William's continued support. During the rest of March, William was given the lands of William de Lanvalay, one of the committee of twenty-five barons, and Ralph of Rochester to the value of some £300.²³ In addition to this, William was also granted the royal manor of Alton, Hampshire, valued at £60 per annum, for himself and his heirs.²⁴ It was unusual for John to give in perpetuity royal lands, but these were unusual times. On this occasion it seems that the king valued William's support, and was prepared to pay highly for it. Without doubt William was out to exploit the king's vulnerability during the civil war to his own advantage, and it is clear that William knew exactly which lands he wanted.

¹⁸ Powicke, *Loss of Normandy*, pp. 350, 341–2.

¹⁹ *Rot. Norm.*, pp. 58 (2), 86, 87, 89–90, 103, 116, 126; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 78, 82.

²⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 230 b, 233; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 140 b, 167 (2); Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 17.

²¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 250 b. ²² *Ibid.*, p. 251.

²³ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 252, 259 b, 263; *Rot. Chart.*, p. 220.

²⁴ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 220; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 260; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 175 b; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 12; *Book of Fees*, p. 257. This manor had once been held by his brother Peter (*Mag. Rot. Norm.*, ii, pp. cxliv–vi).

But did this policy of granting more and more lands succeed in persuading John's household knights to remain on the royalist side? Roger of Wendover certainly thought that in the wake of the events at Runnymede John was left with barely seven 'equites de propria familia' and so was forced to retreat to the Isle of Wight and from there send abroad for stipendiary knights in order to suppress the rebellion.²⁵ The stipendiary knights came, as we shall see later, but was John really left with so pitifully small a household retinue? Not surprisingly, Wendover was exaggerating John's plight, but he did have a point when he highlighted the difficulties that John had in retaining the services of his household knights. There were no fewer than seventeen household knights who demonstrably left royal service for the rebel side at some point between October 1214 and October 1216. This figure quite probably underrepresents the full total of defections. The most important single source for the identification of those in rebellion are the lists of *reversi* in the close rolls. But as Holt has pointed out, these lists should not be considered as complete.²⁶ The lists of *reversi* simply give the names of those knights and barons who received letters of seisin. In areas where the rebels were at their strongest, a man might not have had his lands confiscated and would, therefore, not require a letter of seisin. Also, when these letters were being issued in large quantities, a letter of seisin to a lord might suffice for all his tenants. Therefore, not all men known to have been in rebellion were entered on these lists. Even if we confine our discussion to the household knights who demonstrably deserted King John, however, we are still left with some illuminating material. A sixth of John's household knights deserted to the rebel faction; just as illuminatingly, of the forty-seven household knights who were mustered at St Albans on 18/19 December 1215, thirty-two were making their very first appearance as royal household knights, and of these, nineteen were making their one and only appearance in the English royal records.²⁷ Only fifteen of the forty-seven household knights listed were well-established members of that élite group within the royal household, a figure that perhaps hints at the difficult circumstances in which John found himself at the end of the reign.

But why did these most trusted of royal servants desert their lord and benefactor in his darkest hour, at a time when he needed them most? To find the answer, we once again have to return to the ties of neighbourhood, tenure, and family which informed the chapter on

²⁵ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 613.

²⁶ Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 37–40.

²⁷ Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', pp. 1–17.

recruitment as well as some of the underlying principles which informed the discussion on the rewards which these men received for their services, and which, in many instances, provided the impetus for service in the royal household.

One of the best examples of the importance of the ties of neighbourhood in enticing one of John's household knights into rebellion occurred in the honour of Richmond, Yorkshire. Hugh Malebisse, one of John's household knights as count and king since the mid-1190s,²⁸ was married to Beatrice, daughter and heir of Wimar fitz Warner and part of the family of the hereditary stewards of the earls of Richmond.²⁹ He therefore held Wensley and Ellerton-on-Swale, Yorkshire, and Wicken and Fordham, Cambridgeshire, in right of his wife. Like most of the tenants of the earldom of Richmond, Hugh joined the rebel faction early on and continued to defy John throughout the civil war, despite the fact that Ranulf of Chester, who had held the earldom since 1205, remained staunchly loyal.³⁰ In this instance the ties of neighbourhood proved too strong even for the ties of lordship to deliver the loyalty of Richmond tenants, including Hugh Malebisse.

Ties of neighbourhood and lordship seem to have been influential in persuading Robert of Ropsley to join the rebel cause. Robert's demesne manor of Ropsley in Lincolnshire was held from the rebel William d'Albini of Belvoir, as was his manor of Mere in the same county.³¹ Robert also held Frampton and Donington in Lincolnshire from the Richmond honour whose tenants were united in their opposition to John.³² Despite this concentration of lands in rebel areas, Robert remained loyal to John until after the events at Runnymede in June 1215, when he was listed by Wendover amongst the king's supporters.³³ Robert seems to have succumbed to the influences of the rebels shortly after this nadir for the king's fortunes since he ceased to appear in the records until his manor of Bradwell was formally confiscated in December 1215.³⁴ His defection to the rebels was clearly a serious blow, and John attempted to woo Robert back to his side. During February and March 1216, the king issued no fewer than four consecutive letters of safe conduct in favour of Robert.³⁵ Unfortunately for John, these advances were unsuccessful, and Robert remained in the rebel camp until the bitter end.³⁶

²⁸ See p. 22.

²⁹ *Early Yorks. Charters*, iii, p. 459; v, pp. 25, 32.

³⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 261 b, 323 b, 330; Holt, *Northerners*, p. 46.

³¹ *Book of Fees*, pp. 184, 178.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 194.

³³ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 589.

³⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 243 b.

³⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 166 b, 169, 170 b, 173 b.

³⁶ *Maréchal*, lines 16,686–702; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 320 b.

The Household Knights of King John

It was not only the ties of neighbourhood and tenure that drew William de Lande into rebellion, but also the ties of family. William was a Lincolnshire man and held Coleby from the king;³⁷ Thorganby, Stanbury, Habrough, and Killingholme from Norman Darcy;³⁸ Wispington in Lincolnshire from Robert of Tattershall;³⁹ two fees from the rebel Roger de Mowbray in Yorkshire;⁴⁰ and one fee in Ewerby Thorpe, Lincolnshire, from the widow of Gerard de Camville, the redoubtable Nichola de Haya.⁴¹ But it was the connection with the rebel Norman Darcy that seems to have been the most important influencing factor on William's loyalty. In 1206, William had fined in 50 marks and one palfrey for the king's permission to marry Johanna, widow of Thomas Darcy and mother of Norman.⁴² Most tellingly, when William was reconciled for the second time with the royalist side on 16 August 1217, he was accompanied by Norman Darcy.⁴³ Presumably William was amongst the first of John's household knights to rebel, since, apart from a brief flirtation with the royalist cause when he returned to John's side between April and September 1216,⁴⁴ he failed to appear in the royal records from the point at which John returned from Poitou.

The defection of other royal knights may also be ascribed to one or more of these ties of dependence. Stephen de Gant, for example, held lands in Lincolnshire and Leicestershire and was the brother of the prominent Lincolnshire rebel, Gilbert de Gant.⁴⁵ Although Stephen's lands were not formally confiscated until January 1216, it seems likely that he followed his brother Gilbert into rebellion early on in the civil war.⁴⁶ The brothers Simon and Eustace de Campo Remigio were nephews of the rebel Gerard de Furneal. The brothers' six hides held from the king in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, were confiscated in November 1215.⁴⁷ Like their uncle, they made peace with King John in January 1216, but whether they rebelled again with Gerard de Furneal by September of the same year remains unclear.⁴⁸ The household knight William de Bosco held lands in Norfolk and Suffolk, though

³⁷ *Red Book*, p. 523; *Book of Fees*, p. 188.

³⁸ *Book of Fees*, pp. 156, 1019 (2); *Pipe Roll 8 John*, p. 102; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 349.

³⁹ *Book of Fees*, pp. 1,060, 166; *Red Book*, p. 390.

⁴⁰ *Book of Fees*, p. 1,097. ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁴² *Rot. Fin.*, p. 349; *Pipe Roll 8 John*, p. 102. ⁴³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 320.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 261, 289 b; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 143.

⁴⁵ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 226; *Rufford Charters*, 4 vols., ed. C. J. Holdsworth (Thorton Society, Record Series, 29–30, 34–5, Nottingham, 1972–81), pp. 724, 846, 890, 897; Dugdale, *Baronage*, i, p. 401.

⁴⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 246.

⁴⁷ *Book of Fees*, pp. 14, 123; *Red Book*, p. 504; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 236; *Rot. Norm.*, p. 94.

⁴⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 164 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 251, 252, 257 b; Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 29–30.

apart from 30 acres in Gislingham, Suffolk, it is not clear exactly where or from whom he held these lands.⁴⁹ William seems to have rebelled at some point between December 1215 and March 1216, before briefly returning to John on 1 April 1216. But he rebelled again shortly after this date. Like William de Bosco, Richard le Waleys appears to have deserted John in December 1215, until when he had been a loyal adherent.⁵⁰ His lands were concentrated in Berkshire, where he held Upper Lambourn from the king, and Eastbury and Blakegrave from William de Lanvalay.⁵¹ Richard was also married to Matilda de Lanvalay, cousin to William de Lanvalay, one of the committee of twenty-five;⁵² although his defection came somewhat late in the day, it is possible to speculate that these tenurial and family connections may have had some effect on Richard's loyalty to John.⁵³ The household knight Thomas Sturmy held a knight's fee from Walter de Beauchamp in Rushock, Worcestershire, which had been granted to him by Walter.⁵⁴ Both Thomas and Robert de Fécamp, another household knight, appear to have deserted the king along with Walter shortly after the arrival of Prince Louis in May 1216.⁵⁵ On their return to the king's side in early August, Thomas and Robert were seized with other knights holding of the Beauchamp barony.⁵⁶ A month later, on 24 September 1216, Walter de Beauchamp was given an imprest of 10 marks which was handed over to Thomas Sturmy, who was described as 'Walter's knight'.⁵⁷ It seems likely that Thomas and Robert both followed their local lord into the rebel camp.

Of all the household knights whose lands lay in areas of large-scale rebellion, the most surprising man to succumb to the influences of his neighbours was John of Bassingbourne. John had been one of John's closest household knights during the reign, as his frequent appearances in this book testify, and yet at some point during the autumn of 1215 he defected to the barons' side.⁵⁸ John's tenurial links in no way explain his extraordinary decision: his lands were concentrated in Essex and Hertfordshire. He held of the bishop of Ely in Bishop's Hatfield and Rettendon, Essex, and Kelshall, Hertfordshire;⁵⁹ from the king in West

⁴⁹ *Curia Regis Rolls*, ii, pp. 5, 50; *Red Book*, pp. 395, 397; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 258, 334.

⁵⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 233, 241 b.

⁵¹ *Book of Fees*, pp. 106, 107; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 241 b.

⁵² *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 202 (2).

⁵³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 302 b, 317, 333.

⁵⁴ *Book of Fees*, p. 140; *Red Book*, p. 567; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, p. 135 b; *Curia Regis Rolls*, xiii, no. 115.

⁵⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 191.

⁵⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 280 b.

⁵⁷ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 100.

⁵⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 161 b.

⁵⁹ *Red Book*, p. 526; *Book of Fees*, p. 125.

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Thurrock, Essex;⁶⁰ Benefield, Northamptonshire; Takely and Abbot's Stanstead, Hertfordshire; and Sandon and Terefield, Essex, all in right of his wife.⁶¹ The only land that he held from a prominent baron was one fee in Stainton-le-Vale and Worlaby, Lincolnshire, from the absentee earl of Leicester.⁶² If we exclude the possibility of a fit of conscience, it seems that John's reasons for leaving the king's service were based on the influences of his near neighbours rather than on a strong tenurial link to a powerful rebel baron.

The experiences of these men point to a dilemma that must have confronted many of John's men during this difficult period in the reign. Significant numbers of the king's household knights held lands of lords other than the king; indeed, many of the knights owed their very entry into the royal household to those other lords. This conflict in allegiances clearly put the relationship between them and the king under considerable strain. Thomas Sturmy, for example, held land from Walter de Beauchamp, a powerful Worcestershire baron, and yet he was also a royal household knight. Thomas would, therefore, have sworn oaths to both the king and to Walter. No doubt King John would have expected his knights to reserve their first loyalty for him, since he was their liege lord and they had entered into the special relationship reserved for members of the royal household. Yet in so many cases this relationship clearly did little to maintain at least some of John's household knights in their loyalty. Like Thomas Sturmy, many other royal household knights felt that their best interests were served by following the man or men who dominated their own local societies. William de Lande followed his stepson, Norman Darcy, and the dominant members of Lincolnshire society into rebellion; Robert of Ropsley followed his demesne-lord, William d'Albini of Belvoir, into rebellion; Hugh Malebisse followed his neighbours in the earldom of Richmond into rebellion. Time and again, the local interests of John's household knights drew them away from the king's side when most he needed their support, and this illustrates a further point. John's household knights did not operate in a vacuum, somehow separated from the stresses and strains of local society by the rarified atmosphere of the court. On the contrary, these men were part and parcel of the local communities in which they operated, bound by the ties of lordship, kinship, and neighbourhood that permeated medieval England. As we have seen, John tried to compensate for these competing draws on his knights' loyalty by heaping extra rewards on them. Sometimes this must have worked, and sometimes it patently

⁶⁰ *Book of Fees*, p. 277.

⁶¹ *Feet of Fines Essex*, i, pp. 128, 136; *Curia Regis Rolls*, xii, no. 1,277.

⁶² *Book of Fees*, p. 158.

did not; it especially did not work when it became apparent to all those around the king that he seemed likely to lose the civil war; that moment, of course, came with the arrival of Louis of France in May 1216.

Whatever state John's cause was in during the run up to Magna Carta, in the wake of the events at Runnymede, King John was in the driving seat. In August 1215, he sent envoys to the Roman curia to have the Charter annulled, and at the same time began the process of recruiting mercenaries from the continent. By October 1215, the king was strong enough to lay siege to Rochester castle which, by the end of November, he had taken. In December, word arrived that Innocent III had declared the rebels excommunicate and anathematised; immediately afterwards, John divided his army in two, taking his forces northwards to lay waste to the rebels' stronghold. It was a crushing onslaught, and the chronicler Abbot Ralph of Coggeshall makes it clear that the rebels were seemingly helpless in the face of John's forces and so either submitted to him or fled.⁶³ The whole campaign was a huge triumph for John, and it must have looked as though the rebels were doomed. Their only hope was that Louis of France, whom they had nominated as John's heir, would arrive with his forces before it was too late. Luckily for the rebels, Louis was true to his word, and he arrived in England on 22 May 1216.

Louis's arrival in England was the last straw for many of John's supporters. Even those who stood highest in royal favour were not immune from the desire to follow the dictates of sordid self-interest. William earl of Salisbury, the king's half-brother, was one of those whose baser instinct got the better of him. The earls of Arundel and Warren, the count of Aumale, even the king's chief forester, Hugh de Neville, deserted what they felt sure was a sinking ship. And with rats like these leaving John's side, why should not the mice jump ship, too? Certainly, men whose resolve was suspect must have seen this as the moment to join the rebels. The brothers Thomas and Robert Peverel were just such men.

The Peverel brothers had been in John's household for most of the reign; indeed, Robert had served in Richard I's household, and both had profited greatly from John's largesse. Thomas held in chief the share of a knight's fee in Faccombe and 4 marks of land in Ellingham, Hampshire.⁶⁴ Robert's lands were scattered throughout Sussex, where he held his father's land in the rape of Pevensey; in Dorset, where he

⁶³ Coggeshall, pp. 174–9

⁶⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 15 b, 33, 93 b; *Curia Regis Rolls*, v, pp. 151, 167.

held the manor of Bradford; and in Devon, where he held Alverdiscott.⁶⁵ The brothers seem to have deserted the royalist cause at or about the same time, that is, between the beginning of May and end of June 1216.⁶⁶ They were certainly seized within a day of each other in July 1217.⁶⁷ Both had records of long and loyal service with King John. Robert, the elder brother, had been in John's service since 1199, and may well have started in the household of Richard I.⁶⁸ Thomas' career in John's household probably did not begin until 1207, but like his brother, Thomas' record of royal service was one which displayed great loyalty and utility.⁶⁹ Neither of them held lands within areas where the rebels were strong, and neither did they hold from powerful baronial rebels. Given the timing of their withdrawal from royal service, it is reasonable to suppose that the arrival of Prince Louis precipitated the defection of these two hitherto loyal and long-serving household knights.

We may educe similar motives for some of the other household knights who defected to the rebel camp at or about this time. Henry IV de la Pomeroy was a major landholder in Devon, holding something like thirty-two knights' fees in chief,⁷⁰ as well as other sundry fees in Cornwall and Somerset.⁷¹ He was an important representative of the king in Devon and,⁷² during the early days of the civil war, had been entrusted with the custody of Exeter castle and the county of Devon with John of Earley.⁷³ Henry was still in royal service on 2 March 1216, when he was ordered to take seisin of the lands in Devon of another household knight, William des Préaux.⁷⁴ At some point soon after this instruction was issued, Henry joined the rebel faction. He soon returned to royal service, however, and was seized of his land on 10 September 1216.⁷⁵ William des Préaux likewise deserted John on the arrival of Prince Louis. As we have seen, William had managed to squeeze a considerable amount of land out of John in return for his continued support.⁷⁶ But when Louis arrived, William seems to have given John little chance of success and decided that his interests would be better served within the rebel ranks.⁷⁷

⁶⁵ *Book of Fees*, p. 71; *Red Book*, p. 203; *Pipe Roll 2 Richard I*, p. 129; *Book of Fees*, pp. 88, 271, 379; *Red Book*, p. 559.

⁶⁶ *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 144; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 276 b, 250 b–251.

⁶⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 315 b (3), 316 (2), 321 b.

⁶⁸ See p. 19. ⁶⁹ See p. 28.

⁷⁰ *Red Book*, pp. 558, 559, 226.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 612, 540; *Book of Fees*, p. 83.

⁷² *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, pp. 168–73; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 128 b.

⁷³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 199 b–200; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 135 b–136.

⁷⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 250 b. ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

⁷⁶ See pp. 102, 103. ⁷⁷ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 222 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 323.

Thanks to the work of J. C. Holt, we know why the mass of the knightly class of England made the decisions they did as to which side they should support in the civil war. The ties of tenure, neighbourhood, service, faction, and family all played a role in determining which way a knight would swing.⁷⁸ What is interesting about this survey of the actions of John's household knights is that they, too, were subject to exactly the same influences as the ordinary knights of England. Some were lured away to the rebel side by the influence of friends, neighbours, relations, and lords, whilst others rebelled because of the waning fortunes of the king. Some, too, might even have been swayed by a guilty conscience. It is, though, a remarkable picture of disloyalty from the rank and file of the king's household knights. These were the men who, I have argued, had a special relationship with the king; they enjoyed his hospitality, they were *de hospicio domini regis*. Yet when John's position became seemingly untenable, or when the lands of the household knights came under threat, these men who had supped the king's wine, eaten his food, received his *benevolentia*, rejected their master and chose instead to look after their own and their families' interests. So what went wrong? Why did these men desert John?

The answer to these questions seems to be a relatively simple one. In the instances where royal household knights did defect to the baronial side, the system of rewarding his household knights whereby they served in the expectation of future reward, was beginning to break down. John, surely aware of the pressures his household knights must have been under, tried to satiate their demands for land immediately. But like any system of remuneration based on the one-off grant of lands, once the land had been given, the recipient's interest lay in protecting that land. Holt has said of the king's *familia* that 'if John was committed to them, they were equally committed to him.'⁷⁹ Whilst this may have been true for the really important individuals in the household, such as the royal stewards William de Cantilupe, Falkes de Bréauté, William of Harcourt, and Brian de Lisle (though the earl of Salisbury's defection should caution against a monochrome view of these men), it is not true for those men who constituted the backbone of the household knights, and hence the backbone of John's army. The king tried to buy these men, but as a result these men were put in a position of strength from where they could extract larger and more frequent rewards. The loyalty of these knights, therefore, became conditional on the king's maintenance of power; if the king failed to maintain his power, then his ability to command the loyalty of his

⁷⁸ Holt, *Northmen*, chs. 4 and 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

household knights became seriously impaired. And this ability was particularly impaired when the ties of neighbourhood, family, and tenure put pressures on the royal household knights to rebel. The household stewards, who remained loyal, were men of substance in their own rights; as a result, they were in a position to resist the lure of John's baronial opposition. Even when they were named and threatened if they failed to join the ranks of the rebels, as were the stewards William de Cantilupe and Brian de Lisle,⁸⁰ these men could and did stand by their king. But most of the household knights were simply not in this league. With the exception of individuals such as Henry IV de la Pomeroy, who may be dismissed as an opportunist, the household knights who turned against King John were the men who were more vulnerable to the pressures that could be brought to bear on them by the rebel barons. We shall probably never know whether or not these men deserted John willingly or felt pressured into rejecting him because of the king's inability to protect their landed interests in rebel-held areas. On at least one occasion, for example, a rebel claimed to have been coerced into turning against the king by a powerful neighbour.⁸¹

What of those royal household knights who did stay loyal to King John? After all, the loyalists were, when all is said and done, in the majority in the royal household. Clearly the military role of the household knights was of paramount importance during the last phase of the reign. As castellans of royal castles, controllers of strategic areas, and as the backbone of the king's field-army, John's knights had a central role to play. I have already examined in some detail the role of the household knights in the maintenance of his power during times of war.⁸² The 1210 campaign in Ireland, for example, makes clear the central role that John's household had in the organisation of the king's military campaigns,⁸³ and we must presume that they also took a leading role in the organisation of John's campaigning activity during the civil war. Occasionally we can see them leading contingents of knights, sergeants, and crossbowmen about the countryside for the purpose of strengthening the king's garrisons. These men also played an important role in defending strategic castles, and we can also find them playing the role of regional commanders.

But it is the muster roll for 18/19 December 1215 which gives us a real insight into both the strength of John's military forces and their identity.⁸⁴ This muster roll seems to record the names of those knights

⁸⁰ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 587–8. ⁸¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 352 b.

⁸² See ch. 3. ⁸³ Church, 'The 1210 campaign in Ireland', pp. 45–57.

⁸⁴ The detailed dating evidence is in Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', pp. 1–8.

who accompanied King John on his expedition to the north in the winter months of 1215–16; what it shows is a king who was very much bereft of support from among his English knights. It has long been known that in the wake of the events at Runnymede, John sent abroad for stipendiary knights. Roger of Wendover, for one, certainly thought that John needed these men because he had forfeited the support of the native English.⁸⁵ Toward the end of September, these men began to arrive in England in large numbers; despite the disaster off the East Anglian coast in which Hugh de Boves and many of his Brabançons were drowned, by early October, John was strong enough to lay siege to Rochester castle.⁸⁶ According to the Flemish author of the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, as each day passed, John's forces grew stronger, until soon John felt strong enough to confront his rebel barons in the open.⁸⁷ On 16 December, when news came that Innocent III had excommunicated the rebels and had anathematised them, the king went straight to St Albans to have the sentences read aloud. There the king divided his army in two, with half under the leadership of the earl of Salisbury, Falkes de Bréauté, by this time a royal steward, Savari de Mauléon, one of John's Poitevin supporters, Gerard de Sotteghem, one of John's Flemish mercenary captains, and Walter le Buck, a Brabantine mercenary captain who had been regularly in the pay of the king.⁸⁸ Their task was to remain in the south with half the army to keep the rebels in London occupied. Meanwhile John, with the other half of the army, was to go northwards to ravage the lands of the northern rebels. This muster roll, it seems, records the names of those who went northwards with the king. But just who were these men? The heading on the face of the manuscript is simple enough: 'nomina militum'. The names of these knights are divided up into sections and the list continues on the dorse of the manuscript; in total, there are four hundred and three knights listed (including the inevitable repetitions and crossings out). In addition to these *milites*, there is a final column on the dorse of the manuscript headed 'nomina militum qui sunt de hospitio domini regis'. These are the forty-seven royal household knights who also went with John on his northern expedition.

The answer to the question who were these knights is disarmingly simple: by and large they were not Englishmen; rather they appear to have been the men whom John had summoned from the continent and

⁸⁵ *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 613; *Coggeshall*, p. 174; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 153, 153 b.

⁸⁶ *Normandie*, pp. 154–5; *Coventry*, ii, p. 226; *Coggeshall*, p. 175; *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 621–3.

⁸⁷ *Normandie*, pp. 160–3.

⁸⁸ *Coggeshall*, p. 177. Wendover has William Brewer instead of Gerard de Sotteghem (*Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 635–6).

whom he had received into his service during the autumn months of 1215. The men listed on the manuscript are divided into *constabularia* of around twenty-five knights, which do indeed seem to represent the natural divisions of John's army. So, for example, Robert de Béthune, who heads column one and who arrived in England with his retainers around 7–9 October 1215,⁸⁹ was lord of Dendermonde and soon to become lord of Béthune and advocate of Arras.⁹⁰ Amongst the twenty-four knights who were listed as being in his constabulary were Bernard de Rubais from Roubaix⁹¹ and Guislain de Havekirke from Haverskerque in the modern département of Nord. There were a further thirteen knights whose names can be identified as originating from the Pas-de-Calais.⁹² A similar pattern may be discerned in the arrangement of those men listed in column two. The leader of this constabulary was Adam de Wallincourt, castellan of Ypres and of Bailleul, and originating from Wallincourt in the département of Nord.⁹³ Included in this list are Baldwin de Brudam, Adam's brother,⁹⁴ two knights from the département of Nord,⁹⁵ and a further ten from the Pas-de-Calais.⁹⁶ So, not only do the divisions of the manuscript reflect the real fighting units within John's army whose members were brought together through their common ties of dependence to the leader of each constabulary, but also the army was made up largely of foreigners, men who had come to England to receive the king's pay in order to put down the rebellion of his subjects.⁹⁷ The flower of English chivalry did not follow John to the northern parts of his realm; it was that most hated of military men in the armies of medieval Europe, the *rou tiers*, who in the winter and spring of 1216 forced the English rebels to either submit to the king or flee.

The manuscript, therefore, goes a long way towards explaining both

⁸⁹ *Normandie*, pp. 154–5.

⁹⁰ Warlop, *Flemish Nobility before 1300*, iii, pp. 668–9.

⁹¹ *Het archief van de abdij van Boudelo te Sinaai-Waas en te Gent*, 2 vols. in 3, ed. G. Asaert and C. Vleeschouwers (Brussels, 1976–83), ii 1, nos. 14, 15, 26.

⁹² Henry de Nova ecclesia (Nouvelle-Eglise), John de Capele (La Chappelle), William de Flechin (Fléchin), Guy de Estanford (Etienfort), William de Saple (Etaples), William de Wiamoch (Wimereux), Hugh de Wimes (Wismes), Eustace de Hundenghein (Audinghen), William de Lenens (Lens), Matheus de Rouleport (Rollepot), John and Walter de Drinkam (Dringhen), Walter de Lanberge (La Lamberge).

⁹³ *Chartes anciennes de l'abbaye de Zonnebeke*, ed. C. Callewaert (Bruges, 1925), no. 32.

⁹⁴ *Docs. of English History*, p. 238; *Zonnebeke*, no. 32.

⁹⁵ John de Marchecurt (Manchicourt), Robert de Warigni (Wargnies).

⁹⁶ Anselm and John de Rollers, Werricus de Auennes (Avannes), Hugh de Longervall (Longueville), John de Houcort (Haucourt), Manasser and Adam de Beauueer (Beauvois), Egidius de Bures (Buire), Reginald de Tun (Tuncq).

⁹⁷ For further details on the origins of the men who made up John's army see Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', pp. 9–17.

John's success and his failure in the first half of 1216. His success was built on the strength of his army boosted by the presence of large numbers of foreign knights. An army of four hundred or so knights was in this age a formidable one indeed. But because John was so reliant on these men for his military superiority, when Louis of France arrived in England, as the author of the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* observed, John felt unable to confront the prince with an army consisting mainly of Philip Augustus's subjects.⁹⁸

John, alas, seems to have forfeited the support of many native Englishmen whom we might have expected to serve in his armies. The list of knights on the Irish campaign, for example, looks nothing like the list preserved in the muster roll. The Irish campaign was an English affair, at least as far as the knights who accompanied King John were concerned.⁹⁹ The winter campaign in 1216 was a Flemish affair, even though the English king was in the lead. Just as importantly, John seems to have forfeited the support of far too many of his household knights. At least seventeen men deserted the ranks of the *milites de familia regis*. These men were his 'creatures', men who, in most cases, owed everything to their master. It was the king who gave them their grants of lands, custodies of heirs, lucrative marriages, and important administrative posts. These were men whom one would expect to remain loyal to John to the bitter end, as indeed, lest we forget, many of them did. John, as Holt has pointed out, was 'committed to them' and they 'to him',¹⁰⁰ but it is apparent that not every household knight saw it quite that way. Even those knights who remained loyal to the king were not averse to pursuing activities devoted to their own self-interests. The king's steward and one-time household knight Brian de Lisle provides an excellent example of this type of behaviour. In August 1215, Brian was ordered to hand over the castle of the Peak to Ranulf of Chester; however, it is apparent that nearly a year later he was still in control of the castle, much to the king's surprise. Brian refused to relinquish his control over this castle on three further occasions during John's lifetime,¹⁰¹ and continued to resist the regency government over the tenure of the castle. In the end, the earl of Derby was forced to engage Brian in a 'shabby' private war in order to prise the castle from Brian's grip. To Holt this was symptomatic 'of the king's declining power to compel' which presented the government of William Marshal with the

⁹⁸ *Normandie*, p. 169.

⁹⁹ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 172–228; Church, 'The 1210 campaign in Ireland', pp. 45–57.

¹⁰⁰ Holt, *Northerners*, p. 226.

¹⁰¹ This time John's instructions were in favour of William, earl of Derby.

The Household Knights of King John

major problem of controlling men like Brian de Lisle.¹⁰² What this example also demonstrates is that, like those household knights who went as far as open rebellion, those who on the surface remained loyal were not too blind to notice that the civil war presented opportunities to further their own interests, even if it were at the expense of the king.

Throughout his reign John had relied heavily upon his household for the governance of his realm.¹⁰³ The household knights in particular gave John an important pool of available talent from which he could draw for his administrative officers. To a greater or lesser extent John managed to keep these men in line by means of a careful use of the system of rewards based upon grants of land in recognition of service already rendered. But when it became increasingly apparent that the king could no longer provide these lands or guarantee the continued tenure of those lands already dispensed, the system broke down. John's power over his knights, the control he exercised by the grant of lands, wardships, and the like, was clearly circumscribed by the events of the civil war. Service in the expectation of future reward was no longer the norm since there were other, more powerful, factors influencing the loyalty of John's household knights. John was forced to give immediate grants of land in an attempt to retain the support of his knightly followers. But in many cases this attempt seems to have been to no avail. Those knights who were firmly entrenched in the areas in which the rebels were strong, or whose lords had joined in the rebellion, were given strong motivation to desert the king.

¹⁰² Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 140-1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-250.

JOHN'S HOUSEHOLD KNIGHTS DURING THE MINORITY OF HENRY III

Amongst those gathered around King John's death-bed to witness the terms of his last will and testament were the men who were to become the key players in the minority government. Guala, the papal legate, who was to play a central role in establishing Henry III securely on his throne; Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, who was to be the young king's tutor in his early years; William Marshal, the earl of Pembroke, who was to be Henry's regent; Ranulf, earl of Chester, considered by some as a possible alternative as regent to the earl Marshal; William Brewer, who was also destined to be a major player in the minority government; and Falkes de Bréauté, the royal steward. Absent from this list of John's foremost supporters gathered around his death-bed was, of course, Hubert de Burgh, at that time holed up in Dover castle which he dare not leave given its importance to the safety of the realm; but he, too, was to have a significant role to play in the new minority government.¹ It was these men who in the first years of the reign were to bring the civil war to its conclusion and to begin the process of reestablishing royal rule in England. And it was these men who determined the composition of the body of *milites de familia regis* during the minority years.

The first notice that we have of the new king's knightly establishment occurs in the close rolls for the end of November 1217. Here the regent gave orders for seven knights of the king's household to receive robes of green or brown, presumably for the celebrations that must have greeted the end of Henry's first year as king.² The names of five of these seven

¹ For all these men see Carpenter, *Minority*. Sometimes more specifically, but not always so, see: N. C. Vincent, ed., *The Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, Papal Legate in England, 1216–1218* (Canterbury and York Society, 83, 1996), pp. xxxviii–lviii; Vincent, *Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester 1205–38: an Alien in English Politics* (Cambridge, 1996); Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp. 117–32; J. W. Alexander, *Ranulf of Chester: a Relic of the Conquest*, (Athens, GA, 1983), pp. 69–91; Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust*, pp. 71–90.

² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 345 b.

men were recorded by the scribes who made out the order on the regent's behalf; they were John Russell, Walter de Verdun, Adam of Stawell, Eustace de Grenville, and Hugh Dispenser. The following May, the regent gave an order that nine of the king's knights were to receive robes, six of whom were named by the scribes; they were same John Russell, Eustace de Grenville, and Adam de Stawell, who received robes in November, and William de Bréauté, Ralph de Trumbleville, and Warin Capellanus,³ who elsewhere is described as 'capellanus regis', making dubious his identification as a household knight in this source.⁴

But who were these household knights of Henry III? Three of the knights, John Russell, Walter de Verdun, and Ralph de Trumbleville, were former household knights of King John; a fourth, William de Bréauté, was a former household squire; and a fifth, Adam de Stawell, had certainly been in royal service since 1205, though whether as a household knight is uncertain.⁵ But it is clear that membership of John's knightly establishment was not the criterion by which these men entered into the ranks of Henry III's household knights. Earlier service in the royal household may well have helped some of these men into Henry III's household because of the experience they would have gained there, but the real entrée came through the king's guardians.

Eustace de Grenville, for example, who seems to have had no connection with the royal household before 1216, was a man of the bishop of Winchester. He appeared regularly in the bishop's pipe roll in 1210, and was the bishop's deputy at the Tower until that was handed over to the archbishop of Canterbury as security for John's observance of Magna Carta.⁶ Hugh Dispenser was quite patently a placeman of the earl of Chester. He was in receipt of some patronage from King John, but this came through the offices of the earl, and he witnessed some twenty-eight of the earl's charters.⁷ William de Bréauté was Falkes de Bréauté's brother,⁸ a patronage connection that needs no further explanation. Adam de Stawell seems to have had a strong connection with William Brewer. Adam's manors of Langford Budville and

³ Ibid., pp. 362, 363.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 345 b, 360, 464, 519.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 22, 39 b, 66, 118 b, 119; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 190, 203, 207, 212, 222, 223.

⁶ *The Pipe Roll of the Bishopric of Winchester, 1210-1211*, pp. 26, 42, 70, 71, 75, 96, 97, 109 (2), 110, 111, 112, 119, 120 (2), 127, 128, 129; *Calendar of Charters and Documents Relating to Selborne and its Priory*, 2 vols., ed. W. Dunn Macray (Hampshire Record Society, 1941, 1944), ii, pp. 5, 63, 64, 65; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 175 b, 182, 198 b, 211 b; *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 133.

⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 79; *The Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, c.1071-1237*, ed. G. Barraclough (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 126, 1988), pp. 211-12, 214, 258, 260, 271, 290, 308, 315, 337, 348, 351, 353-4, 357-60, 374, 379, 381, 384, 386, 389, 394, 402, 408, 416.

⁸ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 19.

Pyleigh, Somerset, were adjacent to William Brewer's manor of Milverton.⁹ Although there is no evidence to show that Adam held Stawell itself, it is worth pointing out that the manor from which Adam's family took their name is less than 2 miles from Bridgwater, the manor which formed the *caput* of William Brewer's estates.¹⁰ Moreover, in January 1207, a grant which gave 100 shillings of land to Adam in Scole, Norfolk, was attested by Brewer.¹¹ On two of the three occasions that Adam performed duties *extra curiam* for King John, the orders were attested by none other than William Brewer.¹² Ralph de Trubleville appears to have been patronised by Hubert de Burgh.¹³ It seems possible that Walter de Verdun was placed in the royal household by none other than the regent himself. He was the Marshal's under-sheriff in Essex and Hertfordshire in 1218 before being given the sheriffdom in his own right;¹⁴ although this evidence comes from after the point at which Walter must have entered Henry III's household, the connection between the two seems compelling. Quite where John Russell fits into this pattern remains uncertain. He had been in royal service since the mid-1190s, and towards the end of John's reign he was in constant attendance upon the king. It may have been that John was a 'safe pair of hands' and acceptable to all as a household knight and the very first of Henry's stewards of the royal household.¹⁵

In the initial stages of the new reign, therefore, the clique of the royal household knights reflected the interests of the king's guardians, each of whom seemed to want his own representative in what had become a very select band of men numbering no more than nine by the first months of 1218. The patronage connections which seem to have given these knights entry into Henry III's household can also be seen in the way that these men's careers reflected the changing fortunes of their patrons. The most striking example of this pattern occurs with Ralph de Trubleville, who seems to have attached himself to the coat-tails of Hubert de Burgh.

The coat-tails of Hubert de Burgh was not a comfortable place to be in the first years of the minority. The justiciar was very much marginalised in the regency government, and Ralph de Trubleville suffered a similar fate. Although Ralph received robes in May 1218, he appears to have done little in the way of royal service during the period in which

⁹ *Book of Fees*, p. 84; *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, p. 74; v, p. 244.

¹⁰ Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust*, p. 80.

¹¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 77; *Book of Fees*, p. 131.

¹² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 118 b, 119.

¹³ PRO, SC1/1/202.

¹⁴ *List of Sheriffs*, p. 43.

¹⁵ See pp. 137–40; PRO, SC1/62/4; SC1/6/43.

the Marshal was Henry III's regent.¹⁶ As a letter that Ralph wrote to Hubert in 1220 testifies, this exclusion from the activities of the royal household also meant exclusion from the rewards that such activities brought. But when Hubert entered the very heart of the minority government in mid-1219, Ralph saw an opportunity to return to the ranks of the *milites de familia regis*. In 1220, he wrote to Hubert to explain the difficulty of his circumstances, and declared that his 'sole hope was in God and [Hubert]', and that without Hubert's help he could no longer continue in his support of the king.¹⁷ It seems that Ralph's plea for help worked, and his career took a turn for the better. By April 1220, Ralph had begun to work for the minority government.¹⁸ In June 1220, he was important enough to be included amongst the witnesses to the agreement by which Henry's sister, Joanna, was to marry Alexander II of Scotland.¹⁹ In July 1220, Ralph was given a gift of 4 marks by the king,²⁰ and in August 1221, he was given land in Coleby, Lincolnshire, for his sustenance in royal service.²¹ In November 1221, Ralph received the most important reward of his career when he was given custody of the land and heir of Henry IV de la Pomeroy.²² On 30 December 1223, when the king was in the process of regaining control over his own destiny, Ralph was given custody of the castle and county of Northampton which had previously been held by Falkes de Bréauté.²³ Clearly Ralph de Trubleville's fortunes were inextricably linked to those of Hubert de Burgh.

The career of Walter de Verdun in the minority government again illustrates the importance of patronage to the fortunes of these men's careers. In February 1217, Walter was part of a deputation sent to Philip d'Albini.²⁴ In June 1217, he was named as one of the custodians of the king's escheats in Lincolnshire from which he handed out lands to royalist supporters and returned land to penitent rebels.²⁵ In April 1218, Walter was given custody of Essex and Hertfordshire, as William Marshal's under-sheriff,²⁶ and was also the regent's deputy as constable of the Tower of London.²⁷ In the following month, Walter was

¹⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 363. In August 1217, Ralph was given the lands of his late brother, Luke de Trubleville, in Warwickshire; Luke had also been one of John's household knights (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 319 b, 339–339b, 505–505b; *Pipe Rolls 2 Henry III*, p. 50; *4 Henry III*, p. 30).

¹⁷ PRO, SC1/1/202.

¹⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 416.

¹⁹ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 235.

²⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, 422 b.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 468 b, 485, 510 b.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 477 b–478, 494; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 162.

²³ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 418; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 325–9.

²⁴ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 32.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 313, 320.

²⁶ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 146; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 66; initially Walter seems to have been unwilling to answer at the exchequer for these revenues (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 384 b, 525 b).

²⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 358, 525 b; Carpenter, *Minority*, p. 319 n. 15.

commissioned with custody of the honour of Boulogne;²⁸ in July of the same year he was given 100 marks in order to make payments to the king's sergeants gathered at Stamford and also for the carriage of the king's *ingenia* to the muster.²⁹ In November 1218, he was named as one of the king's justices itinerant in the counties of Essex, Hertford, Norfolk, and Suffolk.³⁰ The regent's gradual withdrawal from royal government from December 1218 seems to have marked the point from which Walter was progressively eased out of the central role he had hitherto played in the royal household.³¹ From September 1219 until at least December 1220, he seems to have been in control of the royal manor of Havering,³² one of the manors at which the young Henry spent much of his time.³³ In October 1220, he was sent as the king's representative to the papal curia, not only indicating his continued importance to the regime, but also showing that he had been eased out of the charmed circle of those who were at the centre of affairs.³⁴ In November 1221, Walter was once again sent to the continent on the king's business, this time to Poitou.³⁵ For the remainder of the 1220s until his death in 1229, Walter's service declined, though he did serve as an itinerant justice in his home county of Oxfordshire in 1225.³⁶

The one former knight of John's household who had a significant role to play in the minority government as steward of the royal household, and who did not seem to be patronised by any one particular individual, was John Russell. In February 1217, John was used as part of a deputation sent to Philip d'Albini, a deputation which included such luminaries as Hubert de Burgh, the king's justiciar, John Marshal and Jordan de Saukeville, two of the regent's household knights, and Walter de Verdun.³⁷ John was the only former household knight of King John who received robes in both November 1217 and May 1218;³⁸ it may well be that his initial responsibilities lay within the new king's *domus*.³⁹ He was Henry III's steward of the household as early as January 1217, a post that he held until at least the end of 1222.⁴⁰ In June 1220, he was one of the witnesses for the final agreement for the marriage of Henry's sister, Joanna, to Alexander II of Scotland. In the following month,

²⁸ *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, pp. 150–1, 158. ²⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 365.

³⁰ *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, p. 208. ³¹ Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 103–4.

³² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 399 b, 401 b, 423 b, 443. ³³ Carpenter, *Minority*, p. 94.

³⁴ *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, pp. 257, 268 (2); *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 433 b, 477 b, 598 b.

³⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 477 b.

³⁶ *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, p. 567; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, pp. 182, 204; *Cirencester Abbey Cart.*, ii, pp. 539–43.

³⁷ *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, p. 32; Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp. 197–9.

³⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 345 b, 362. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 602.

⁴⁰ PRO, SC1/62/4; SC1/64/3; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 380 b, 383 b, 388, 432–432b, 502; *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, p. 361.

The Household Knights of King John

John was given responsibility for the observance of the agreement between Berengaria, Richard I's widow, and Henry III.⁴¹ John's function in this agreement was similar to that performed by Geoffrey Luttrell, one of King John's household knights, in 1215.⁴² In October 1220, he was sent with Godfrey of Crowcombe and Ralph Gernun, both also former household knights of King John, to collect Joanna from Hugh de Lusignan to whom she had previously been betrothed. Once Joanna had been collected, John and his companions then assumed responsibility for her care until shortly before the wedding, which took place at York in June 1221.⁴³ Immediately after completion of their obligations to the king's sister and after the fall of Peter de Maulay from grace, John Russell and Ralph Gernun were made joint constables of Corfe castle.⁴⁴ John remained as constable of Corfe until he was given custody of the castles of the Peak and Bolsover in December 1222, castles which had to be extracted from the grip of the earl of Derby.⁴⁵ This was, however, only a short-term arrangement; it was one that was probably designed to make the transition easier for the earl to stomach, since the castles were destined for Brian de Lisle, the man with whom the earl had fought for control of these castles at the end of John's reign.⁴⁶ It was by this stage, too, that it becomes apparent that John was being eased out of the central role he had played in the royal household, as he increasingly came to be used on duties *extra curiam*. In February 1223, John was made sheriff of Hampshire and custodian of Sherborne castle.⁴⁷ Hampshire had been relinquished by Peter des Roches during the period when the king was resuming control of his castles and sheriffdoms.⁴⁸ In December 1223, John gave up the county and castle to the bishop of Bath in exchange for the counties of Warwick and Leicester and Kenilworth castle which had been in the custody of William de Cantilupe, one of the so-called 'dissidents' identified by Roger of Wendover.⁴⁹ During this period John seems to have exhibited many of the finer qualities of a household knight. He was what amounted to a trouble-shooter who was flexible

⁴¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 388, *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, pp. 235, 243-5.

⁴² *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 181 b, 182 (2); *Rot. Chart.*, p. 219 b.

⁴³ *Diplomatic Documents*, i, nos. 96, 98; Shirley, *Royal and other Historical Letters*, i, no. 135; *Patent Roll 1216-25*, p. 255; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 432-b, 432 b, 440-b, 458 b, 459, 459 b, 598 b; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 245, 253.

⁴⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 460, 465 b, 468 b (2), 470, 471 b, 483, 483 b, 514; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 249-50.

⁴⁵ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 361; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 530 b; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 284-5.

⁴⁶ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 365; Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 140-1.

⁴⁷ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 364, 419.

⁴⁸ Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 301-42, and especially pp. 325-9.

⁴⁹ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, pp. 418, 419; *Chron. Maj.*, iii, p. 83.

John's household knights during minority of Henry III

enough to be used as a princess's bodyguard and chaperon. He was given charge of important royal castles on at least three occasions during periods of potential unrest when three of the king's supporters were being relieved of their custodies. As the king's steward, John was responsible for organising the royal household. Finally, he was employed as a sheriff in three separate counties. The death of this valuable royal servant in late September 1224 must have been much lamented.⁵⁰

One further example of the way in which the fortunes of Henry III's household knights were closely connected to those of their patrons may be mentioned here. Although Eustace de Grenville had not been one of John's former household knights, he was quickly promoted to the royal household on the accession of the young king. Eustace's patron was Peter des Roches, who had been appointed as Henry III's tutor. By May 1218 Eustace had been appointed as Henry III's steward, a position that he held with John Russell.⁵¹ Between 1218 and the summer of 1221, Eustace was clearly acting within the household, paying for the king's expenses.⁵² In July 1220, he and his men were exempted from suit at shire and hundred in Yorkshire for as long as he was in service as the king's steward.⁵³ This concession related to the custody of Frethesant, widow of Geoffrey Luttrell, one of John's former household knights, and over Frethesant's niece, the heir of William Bastard whom he had obtained early on in the minority.⁵⁴ This custody gave Eustace control of the fifteen knights' fees of the Paineil barony in Yorkshire. But when bishop Peter was removed from his position as Henry III's tutor in the summer of 1221, Eustace's career also took a turn for the worse.⁵⁵ From this point onwards he was no longer to be found in the king's *domus*, and was presumably dismissed from his position as Henry III's steward. He certainly did not appear in this capacity again until March 1225.⁵⁶

As we have seen, the number of men whom the king's guardians placed in the royal household was very small indeed. There were seven *milites de familia regis* in 1217 and nine in 1218. Throughout the minority, however, the number of household knights gradually increased. By December 1219, the knightly contingent in the household had risen from nine to seventeen.⁵⁷ At the same point in the following year, this contingent had increased to twenty-five.⁵⁸ Throughout the

⁵⁰ *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 121; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 623 b, 648 b.

⁵¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 359.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 355, 364, 365, 367 b, 371, 401 b, 443, 465 b, 468.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 422 b. ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 323.

⁵⁵ Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 257–60.

⁵⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, p. 22 b.

⁵⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 409.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 444.

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1220s the number of household knights continued to increase. At the height of the Montgomery campaign in October 1223 there were at least thirty-seven household knights,⁵⁹ and by 1225–6 the number had risen to 123.⁶⁰ Despite this consolidation of the knightly contingent in the household, the evidence clearly shows that during the difficult years of the minority, Henry III's knightly establishment was considerably smaller than the one which had been retained by his father. To take up their role as a coherent and effective corps of mounted warriors, therefore, the knights of the royal household had to await the young king's majority.

Although not all of John's household knights managed to make the transition to the royal household of Henry III immediately, many of them continued to serve the minority government by enlisting in the households of those who held the reins of power or by serving in some other capacity. Reginald Croc, for example, became a knight in the household of Falkes de Bréauté; it was as such that he appeared at the battle of Lincoln.⁶¹ Ralph fitz Nicholas had been placed in John's knightly household by his lord, the earl of Derby, in or around 1209. On John's death, Ralph returned to the earl's service as his steward.⁶² The earl was, of course, one of the major players in the minority government, and Ralph's move kept him close to the centre of events. Certainly by 1225, Ralph was back in royal service as steward of the king's household.⁶³ Although heavily involved in diplomacy for the minority government, Joldwin de Doe was probably connected to Peter des Roches in some way. He spent a night at the bishop's manor of Brightwell, Oxfordshire, in 1220–1, five weeks at the bishop's manor of Highclere, Hampshire, in 1225–6 recovering from an illness, and he accompanied the bishop on crusade between 1227 and 1229.⁶⁴ For the minority government, Joldwin clearly played a central role in the protection of royal interests in Poitou. On 22 December 1216, Joldwin received letters authorising him to act on the king's behalf in Poitou.⁶⁵ He continued to represent the king throughout the years 1217–19;⁶⁶ in

⁵⁹ Walker, 'The Anglo-Welsh wars', pp. 175–8.

⁶⁰ PRO, C72/2 m. 20.

⁶¹ *Chron. Maj.*, iii, 23: 'miles de familia Falcasii'. Reginald Croc was buried in the abbey at Croxton, Leicestershire.

⁶² See p. 30.

⁶³ B: Ctl. Bredon, John Rylands Libr., Manchester, MS Latin 222, fos 33v–34 (14C); *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, pp. 414, 415.

⁶⁴ Hampshire RO MSS Eccles. II: 159,277, m. 2 d.; 159,280, m. 9 d. (references that I owe to Nicholas Vincent); *Patent Rolls* 1225–32, p. 188; *Cal. Lib. Rolls*, i, p. 81.

⁶⁵ *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, pp. 106–7.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 346.

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May 1220 he was involved in the arrangements for the removal of the king's sister, Joanna, to England.⁶⁷ Joldwin continued to serve the king's interests in the province during the first half of the 1220s. Evidently his services were much appreciated for he received numerous grants from the poverty-stricken minority government. On 16 January 1217, the regent promised to give Joldwin the first *maritagium* to come into royal hands.⁶⁸ In February of the same year, Joldwin was given two royal manors valued at £20; in March, he was given the annual farm from the royal manor of Cheddar, Lincolnshire; in April, he was granted all the land of Geoffrey Huse in Wiltshire; in June, he was granted all the land of Norman Darcy in Lincolnshire, and, in December, the royal manor of Havering, Essex, and the land of Robert de Crec in Suffolk.⁶⁹ In the space of one year Joldwin amassed a considerable amount of land, surely indicative of Joldwin's value to the minority government. The grants of land continued in the following year. In January 1218, the regent authorised a grant of £200 in escheats instead of the revenues of the manor of Havering.⁷⁰ This grant was later converted into an annual fief of £100, but was often paid in arrears because of the regency's solvency problems.⁷¹ The former knight of King John's household Gilbert of Kentwell, like Ralph of Trumbleville, seems to have latched onto Hubert de Burgh. Gilbert had been amongst the defenders of Dover castle during John's reign, though he does not appear to have been a part of the heroic defence of that castle under the direction of Hubert.⁷² But in April 1217, Gilbert was once again in Dover castle, this time under Hubert's command.⁷³ Ralph of Raleigh may well have attached himself to the banner of William Marshal, since he witnessed one of the regent's charters between 1216 and 1219, and served under the Marshal's son in Ireland in 1224.⁷⁴

Other former knights of John's household, not obviously connected with the king's guardians, also found service in the minority government. Geoffrey de Serland was one such knight. After John's death Geoffrey lost control of Sauvey castle, which he had held for the duration of the civil war.⁷⁵ In early January 1217, he was made under-

⁶⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 416, 418 b, 424 b; *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 233; *Diplomatic Documents*, i, nos. 85, 86; *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 160; Shirley, *Royal and other Historical Letters*, i, no. 115.

⁶⁸ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, pp. 22-3.

⁶⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 297, 305, 347-347b, 347 b; *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 36.

⁷⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 350; *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 135.

⁷¹ BL Cotton Claudius CII, fo. 110; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 443-443b, 465, 471, 517 b, 550, 581, 602, 602 b, 603, 626 b, 652.

⁷² See p. 31. ⁷³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 306 b.

⁷⁴ *The Sanford Cartulary*, 2 vols., ed. A. M. Leys (Oxford Record Society, 19, 22, 1938, 1941), pp. 99-100; *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 438.

⁷⁵ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, pp. 13-14.

sheriff of the county of Lincoln under the authority of Nichola de Haya and was posted to Lincoln castle.⁷⁶ On 20 May 1217, the castle was at the centre of action in the battle of Lincoln, a battle which was to be of enormous importance to the royalist cause. It was here, too, that Geoffrey's pivotal role in the battle was noticed by the author of the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*. The author credited Geoffrey with showing first John Marshal and then the bishop of Winchester how they could pass unchallenged into the castle.⁷⁷ Geoffrey's contribution to the royalist victory did not go unnoticed by the regent since, just five days after the battle, he received the lands of Robert de Tettenhall in Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, and Yorkshire for his sustenance in royal service.⁷⁸ Another of John's household knights to find service in the minority government was Henry de Turberville. In February 1217, Henry received the royal manor of Shrivenham for his sustenance in the king's service.⁷⁹ During the first, second, and third years of Henry III's reign, the regent used Henry as one of his emissaries in various parts of England.⁸⁰ Henry was in the army at Stamford in 1218,⁸¹ and in 1221 and 1223 he received further grants of land to sustain him in royal service.⁸² In July 1223, Henry was once again used as a royal emissary.⁸³ In September 1224, he received wardship and marriage rights over the son and heir of William fitz Martin,⁸⁴ and from this point until he left with the king's brother, Richard, for Gascony in 1225, he seems to have been responsible for issuing licences to visiting merchants.⁸⁵

The brothers Walter of Clifford jnr and Roger of Clifford supported the minority government in their centres of power on the march of Wales. Both Walter and Roger were amongst those mustered at Stamford in the summer of 1218.⁸⁶ In January 1219, the brothers were empowered to ensure that instructions of the king's court to the sheriff of Herefordshire were carried out.⁸⁷ And when in June 1220 their father died, Walter succeeded to the barony and the king was assured of a powerful and loyal ally in the west country.⁸⁸ Walter's position as a marcher baron prevented him from regularly going about the king's business in other areas of the country. His brother Roger, however,

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 20, 23–4, 31; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 297 b.

⁷⁷ *Maréchal*, lines 16,428–32; 16,474–80. ⁷⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 309.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 299, 301, 306, 307; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 34; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 31.

⁸⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 602. ⁸¹ PRO, C72/2 m. 22.

⁸² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 448, 455 b; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 65; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 374; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 549 b.

⁸³ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 405. ⁸⁴ *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, pp. 120, 144–5.

⁸⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 625, 650 b; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 493, 502, 515, 573–5; Carpenter, *Minority*, p. 377.

⁸⁶ Sanders, *Feudal Military Service*, p. 110. ⁸⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 386 b.

⁸⁸ *Ancient Correspondence Wales*, p. 5; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 59; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 446 b.

became increasingly active as a king's knight. In June 1222, Roger was sent with William de Cantilupe and John of Monmouth to take control of the castles of the recently deceased Reginald de Breosa.⁸⁹ The reports of Breosa's death were, however, greatly exaggerated, and Roger and his associates were presumably sent away empty handed. In 1223, Roger was with the king's army at Worcester where both he and his brother were amongst the witnesses to a charter given by Henry to Llywelyn, prince of North Wales.⁹⁰ In February 1224, Roger was given custody of the royal castle of St Briavel's, Gloucestershire, with custody of the Forest of Dean.⁹¹ Both in 1225-6 and 1229, Roger was one of the knights of the king's household summoned for overseas service.⁹² Between 1226 and 1230 Roger received an annual money fief of £30 from the king.⁹³

Other former knights of King John were also active in the royalist cause during the minority, though exactly what their functions were is difficult to perceive. But that they were in royal service in some capacity at least is clear, since these men received land which was given specifically for their sustenance in royal service. In July 1217, for example, Ralph of Raleigh and Henry fitz Roy were given the manor of Waltham, Lincolnshire, to sustain them in royal service, orders for which continued to be issued until November 1223.⁹⁴ In 1224, Ralph received letters of protection while he was with the earl of Pembroke in Ireland.⁹⁵ In 1225-6 and 1228, he was summoned as a knight of the king's household with Henry fitz Roy for the two continental campaigns.⁹⁶ In January 1217, Adam de St-Martin was given the royal manor of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, for his sustenance in royal service.⁹⁷ In November 1220, on the death of Philip of Oldcoates, Adam and the clerk, Robert of Lexington, were sent by the minority government to take control of Oldcoates' seal and money which were deposited with the abbot of Welbeck as security for debts which Oldcoates owed to the crown.⁹⁸ In the month following June 1222,

⁸⁹ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, pp. 334, 335; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 500.

⁹⁰ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 411.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 428; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 586, 587, 588, 609, 623 b, 624, 648 b, 649; Roger lost control of the castle and forest by July 1226 (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, p. 126).

⁹² PRO, C72/2 m. 20, 13.

⁹³ Walker, 'Anglo-Welsh wars', pp. 72-8.

⁹⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 316; *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 128; land which had belonged to Alan, count of Brittany (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 342, 353, 490 b, 507, 513 b, 537 b, 574; *Book of Fees*, pp. 284, 362).

⁹⁵ *Patent Rolls 1216-25*, p. 438.

⁹⁶ PRO, C72/2 mm. 20, 15 d.

⁹⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 295 b, 397, 398 b-399.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

when the royal manor of Mansfield had been returned to the king, Adam was given land in Waltham, Lincolnshire, for his continued support in the king's service.⁹⁹ In June 1223 he was sent to Poitou 'in nuntium domini regis'.¹⁰⁰

In 1217, Elias de Mareville was given the land of Robert Peverel, one of John's knights who had defected to the rebel's side, as well as lands escheated to the crown in Lincolnshire, for his sustenance in royal service.¹⁰¹ In April 1218, he was given 100 shillings, and in 1220 and 1222 he was given 5 marks again for his sustenance.¹⁰² Luke de Drumare was given the lands of William fitz Drogo, Lincolnshire, for his sustenance in royal service in May 1217.¹⁰³ In October 1217, Luke received a further grant of the farm of the royal manor of Basingstoke, Hampshire, for the same purpose.¹⁰⁴ Luke was with the army at Stamford in 1218 where he was listed with the men of Hampshire.¹⁰⁵ In 1223 he was with the earl of Derby in the Welsh campaign;¹⁰⁶ in the following year he received letters of protection whilst in Poitou in the king's service.¹⁰⁷ Luke was also summoned as a household knight in 1225–6 and 1229 and brought with him another knight.¹⁰⁸ Godfrey of Crowcombe was given custody of the son and heir of Henry of Braybrooke in January 1217 with marriage rights in return for his homage and service.¹⁰⁹ In the same month Godfrey also received the royal manors of Pitney and Wearne, Somerset.¹¹⁰ Also in January 1217, he received letters of protection, but for what purpose is not made clear.¹¹¹ Godfrey's role as a trusted diplomat during John's reign has already been explored.¹¹² He continued as a royal diplomat in Henry III's reign. In October 1220, he was sent to the King of France 'in nuntium domini regis', and received 15 marks for his expenses.¹¹³ In November 1221, he was sent to Ireland.¹¹⁴ In 1224–6, he was on the

⁹⁹ Carpenter, *Minority*, p. 283 n. 18; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 504.

¹⁰⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 551 (2).

¹⁰¹ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 44; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 302, 316 b.

¹⁰² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 357 b, 413, 502. ¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 309 b.

¹⁰⁴ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 104; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 11; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 424, 455 b, 458 b, 461 b, 472, 478, 482 b; this land was taken into the king's hand in June 1222 (Carpenter, *Minority*, p. 284 n. 24).

¹⁰⁵ Sanders, *Feudal Military Service*, p. 113. ¹⁰⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 573.

¹⁰⁷ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 441–2. ¹⁰⁸ PRO, C72/2 mm. 20, 13.

¹⁰⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 295.

¹¹⁰ *Pipe Roll 5 Henry III*, p. 83; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 296 b.

¹¹¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 295 b. ¹¹² See pp. 63, 64.

¹¹³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 432 b; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 255, which suggests Godfrey may, in fact, have been in Poitou with Ralph Gernun and John Russell. He was certainly involved in conducting the king's sister to England in the summer of 1221 (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 459 b (2)).

¹¹⁴ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 315, 317; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 477 b.

king's business at the papal curia.¹¹⁵ In October 1221, Godfrey was responsible for arranging the purchase of equipment for the king's knights and clerks,¹¹⁶ presaging his later role as steward of the royal household.

It is clear from the preceding examples that many of John's household knights continued to serve the royalist cause after John's death. Most of these knights, however, were not retained in the king's household, but found their sustenance in other ways. Some, like Luke de Drumare, Reginald Croc, and Ralph fitz Nicholas, joined the households of the young king's leading supporters. Others, like Godfrey of Crowcombe, Joldwin de Doe, and Geoffrey de Serland, continued to serve Henry from outside the royal household. These men received grants of land to sustain them in the king's service, but seem not to have been part of Henry's immediate entourage, and so, presumably, did not receive the day-to-day sustenance that a member of the household would expect to receive. Only a few of John's former knights managed to remain inside the royal household during the early years of the minority. Undoubtedly this exclusion from the royal household reflected a loss in status for these men. Having been dismissed from this lucrative position, John's former knights were forced to scramble for a living. As the letter from Ralph de Trumbleville to Hubert de Burgh illustrates, expulsion from the royal household might place a man in considerable financial difficulty.¹¹⁷ The change of kings in 1216, and the resultant minority, clearly had rather unfortunate effects on Ralph's financial circumstances. It seems likely that Ralph was not the only knight of John's household to suffer in this way.

What of those former household knights of King John who seem to disappear from the record evidence of the central administration once John was dead? Obviously, the bond that had kept these men bound to their lord was dissolved following the king's death: the relationship was, after all, a personal one made between one man and another. Those household knights who wished to leave royal service could and, presumably, did: those foreigners, for example, who could see little benefit in hanging around a war-stricken kingdom in support of a 9-year-old boy carried on the shoulders of an 80-odd-year-old man, must have packed their bags and headed off for more lucrative employment. But just as John's household knights were under no obligation to serve the new king, he, or more accurately his guardians, was under no obligation to take them on. The minority government's finances were,

¹¹⁵ *Diplomatic Documents*, i, nos. 136, 149, 153, 162; Shirley, *Royal and other Historical Letters*, i, nos. 209, 215.

¹¹⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 471–471 b.

¹¹⁷ PRO, SC1/1/202.

in the view of Carpenter, 'catastrophic'; no doubt the king's guardians were forced to let men go, particularly after the cessation of hostilities in 1217. After all, the minority government could not even guarantee to grant the household knights escheats once the process of reconciliation had begun, and it became increasingly difficult for them to control wardships and even sherifffdoms.¹¹⁸ In the service of the king during these early years of the minority was not the place to be if one was after rich rewards.

There is, however, one category of John's former household knights for whom it is possible to find an explanation for their exclusion from the ranks of the new king's servants: the rebel household knights. The evidence for these men's later careers is unequivocal. With possibly one exception, no rebel royal household knight played a role in the minority government, and not one of John's rebel knights became a household knight of Henry III's in the 1220s. John's rebel household knights either disappeared completely from the record evidence or appeared only in their capacity as private individuals pursuing their own business. John of Bassingbourne, William de Lande, Hugh Malebisse, Robert Peverel, Gilbert de Say, and Richard le Waleys all appeared in the *curia regis* rolls pursuing their own cases.¹¹⁹ William de Bosco, William de Lande, and Thomas Peverel all played parts as knights of the shire in local cases. William de Bosco, for example, acted as an arresting officer on one occasion in Suffolk.¹²⁰ One knight, Thomas Sturmy, received letters of protection in 1218 for a period of three years while he was on the fifth crusade.¹²¹

The one exception to this picture of exclusion from royal service and favour was William des Préaux. This is, in my view, most remarkable. William's duplicity during the civil war has already been recounted.¹²² He left King John's side on at least two occasions during this period of crisis (and that is if we do not count his departure from John's side in the wake of 1204!). On the first occasion in March 1216, William was tempted back into the royalist fold by gifts from the king valued at some £300. However, when Prince Louis arrived in England at the end of May 1216, William decided that even these grants of land were

¹¹⁸ Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 112–14, 413–17, 78–81.

¹¹⁹ *Curia Regis Rolls*, ix, pp. 40, 113, 128; xi, nos. 946, 2,526; xii, no. 1,243; viii, pp. 49, 193, 308; ix, p. 29; xi, no. 682; xii, no. 370; ix, p. 274; x, p. 232; xi, no. 19; viii, pp. 242–3; xi, no. 765; xii, nos. 2,093, 2,634; ix, p. 297; x, p. 12.

¹²⁰ *Curia Regis Rolls*, ix, p. 359; x, pp. 174, 339; viii, pp. 191, 198, 294, 354; ix, p. 132; x, pp. 2, 142, 176.

¹²¹ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 158; J. M. Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–21* (Philadelphia, PA, 1986), p. 243.

¹²² See pp. 102, 103, 110.

insufficient to persuade him to stand by John. Yet, on returning to the royalist side in September 1217, William managed to do what no other rebel household knight could do: he regained the trust of the minority government. Admittedly William was never again adorned with the title of *miles de familia regis*, but he did obtain the next best thing; he received payments from the government to sustain him in royal service. William managed to retain possession of the royal manor of Alton, Hampshire, which had been conceded to him by King John in March 1216.¹²³ William appears to have lost Alton in the course of 1222;¹²⁴ by 1223, presumably in compensation, he began to receive pay to sustain him in royal service.¹²⁵ Sixteen of the seventeen knights who defected passed into obscurity, but this man managed to hang on to some form of royal favour. More than anything his career demonstrates the remarkable qualities that William des Préaux must have possessed.

In the normal course of events, those knights who had deserted John were completely cut off from royal service and favour. This can perhaps best be illustrated by the later career of one household knight, Thomas Sturmy. Thomas had served King John from at least 1204 and had performed many functions both within the household and *extra curiam*.¹²⁶ He deserted his erstwhile master between the end of April and mid-July 1216 and returned to the king's side in early August.¹²⁷ In September 1216, John gave Walter de Beauchamp an imprest of 10 marks which was paid to Thomas Sturmy, 'Walter's knight'.¹²⁸ The implications of this bold, two-word statement are clear: King John was willing to accept a rebel household knight back to the royal side and return any confiscated lands,¹²⁹ but was not prepared to take that knight back within his *familia*. This position which John took can be understood only if we accept that household knights had a special relationship with the king and that the defection of a household knight was seen as even more abhorrent than that of an ordinary knight. This fits well with the account given by the Barnwell Chronicler of the closing moments of the siege of Rochester. John, we are told, was so infuriated at the resistance that the garrison had put up that he wished to hang all the captives. Savari de Mauléon managed to dissuade the king, since to kill all those who had resisted the siege would set an unhealthy precedent for the rest of the war. But John was determined to hang a crossbow

¹²³ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 220; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 384, 390 b; *Pipe Rolls 2 Henry III*, p. 12; 3 *Henry III*, p. 24; 4 *Henry III*, p. 121.

¹²⁴ PRO, E372/66 r. 7 m. 1.

¹²⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 531, 556 b, 574 b, 596 b, 575.

¹²⁶ See pp. 146–8. ¹²⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 178, 191.

¹²⁸ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 100. ¹²⁹ Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 58–9.

man whom he had nurtured since boyhood.¹³⁰ Evidently this reprisal was meant to be a warning to all such men who had enjoyed the benefits concomitant with membership of the *familia regis*; and the message at least got through to the Barnwell Chronicler.

This view of the loyalty which a household knight was supposed to show his lord can be found more clearly expressed later in the thirteenth century. The treason of Thomas Turbleville in 1295 sent shock waves through the court. Thomas had been a household knight of Edward I who had agreed to spy for the French. His crime was seen as being even more heinous because of his trusted position within the king's entourage.¹³¹ Thomas was 'domesticus et praecipue domini Regis Angliae familiaris', and as a result was privy to the king's innermost thoughts.¹³² The revulsion inspired by disloyalty in a royal household knight must help to explain why John's unfaithful knights failed to find a way back into royal favour. These men had been trusted servants and had been on the receiving end of much royal favour. The minority government might return confiscated lands to these knights, but could not see fit to forgive past transgressions by allowing re-entry into the royal household.

In conclusion, then, it is possible to say that a number of John's knights played important roles in the minority government. There were men like John Russell and Walter de Verdun, who in all probability transferred directly to the young king's household, who are good examples of knights passing easily into positions of power within the minority government. But those men who moved directly from the household of King John to that of Henry III were almost exclusively men whose patrons were powerful enough to propel them into these ranks. The knights of the new king's household were very much the placemen of Henry's guardians and advisers. Henry was presumably not in a position to affect the composition of his household until well into the 1220s. Of those who had defected to the rebel side during John's reign, with the exception of William des Préaux, all were discarded. As for the rest of John's former knights, most ceased to appear regularly in royal documentation; yet it is probable that, given the political situation, many of these knights attached themselves to the banners of the leading players in the minority government. Some of these men were to return to the king's household on his majority when the royal household could

¹³⁰ *Coventry*, ii, p. 227: 'Unum solum suspendi jussit, arcubalistarium quem, ut fertur, a puero nutrierat, cum tamen putaretur prae irae magnitudine quod omnes simul morti amarissimae mox traditurus esset.'

¹³¹ Edwards, 'The treason of Thomas Turbleville, 1295', pp. 296-309.

¹³² J. O. Prestwich, 'Military household', p. 4.

John's household knights during minority of Henry III

once again expand to meet the demands of an active king; for example, Ralph fitz Nicholas and Godfrey of Crowcombe became stewards of the later household of Henry III. Others became household knights of Henry III in the 1220s.¹³³ But because of the passage of time, the dominant picture is one of change. By the time of the first known muster of Henry III's knights in 1225–6, the composition of the king's knightly establishment had altered substantially.

¹³³ Ralph fitz Nicholas, Godfrey of Crowcombe, Walter de Verdun, Roger of Clifford, Joldwin de Doe, Ralph de Trumbleville, Ralph of Raleigh, Henry fitz Roy, Geoffrey de Serland, Henry de Lorty, Osbert Giffard, Gilbert de Sanes, Luke de Drumare, Fulk de Montgomery, Engelram des Préaux, William de Cantilupe, John fitz Philip, Ralph Gernun, Reginald de Berneval, Thomas de Samford, William de Luvetot, Richard de Rivers, Philip d'Albini (PRO, C72/2 mm. 20, 15 d., 13).

SOME CASE HISTORIES

The research for this book, as must be obvious by now, has been based on a prosopographical study of John's household knights, but the presentation of this material has not been in a prosopographical form. On the contrary, I have sought where possible to positively avoid giving detailed analyses of individual careers; rather I have attempted to answer particular questions based on the collective experience of the body of men known to contemporaries as the *milites de familia regis*. The inevitable result of this policy is that the individuals who make up this study have become dismembered; it is, therefore, extremely difficult to construct the outlines of any one individual's career except by a laborious trawl through the index to this work. The purpose of this chapter is to reassemble the lives of a few of these men so that the reader might see something of the sort of men who became household knights of King John.

The best place to start this study is with two men who in their careers exemplify characteristics of the near-perfect household knight: Geoffrey Luttrell and John Russell. Of Geoffrey's origins, little is known. He was certainly in Count John's household by 1191, when he witnessed one of the count's *acta*.¹ In 1194, he was disseised by Richard for his adherence to John's cause and, like his master, Geoffrey spent the rest of the reign in relative obscurity.² In 1199, Geoffrey was apparently rewarded for his support of John when the new king granted him a third of the revenues of the royal manor of Rothley, Leicestershire.³ He continued to hold onto this revenue throughout the reign and passed it on to his son and heir, Andrew Luttrell.⁴ For the next few years little is heard of Geoffrey, and we must presume that he was involved in fairly mundane tasks for the king. In 1202, however, all that changed. Throughout June and July

¹ Preen, 'The *acta* of Count John', no. 70.

² *Pipe Roll 6 Richard I*, p. 84.

³ *Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 245.

⁴ *Book of Fees*, p. 375.

that year, Geoffrey received various sums of money for works on Mulinell castle, Normandy.⁵ On 10 July 1202, he was ordered to take his 'liberaciones . . . sicut alii milites de familia nostra recipiunt', from which point we must date his certain entry into the clique of the royal *familiares*.⁶

For the remainder of his life, Geoffrey concentrated upon his career in the royal household. On 26 March 1204, he was sent to Ireland to preside over a case between Meiler fitz Henry, the king's Justiciar of Ireland, and William de Burgh.⁷ In November the same year, Geoffrey was again dispatched to Ireland, this time to ensure the investiture of the new bishop of Waterford, known as David the Welshman.⁸ On his return from Ireland, Geoffrey initially found employment in the royal *domus*.⁹ In January 1206, however, John began to use Geoffrey more extensively on business outside the court. On 3 January 1206, he was sent into Poitou with 1,500 marks, presumably to bolster the defences of the county while John was making preparations for his intended campaign.¹⁰ During the actual campaign, Geoffrey played a vital role in keeping the king supplied with funds. In June 1206, he released 2,000 marks in his possession to Savari de Mauléon.¹¹ A few days later he released a further 1,000 marks and £2,688 10 shillings Angevin for payments for transports and for the knights and sergeants on this campaign.¹² In addition to these huge sums, Geoffrey also made smaller payments, such as the 60 marks to Pons de Mirabeau.¹³ After the Poitevin campaign, John continued to use Geoffrey to control large amounts of money. In January 1207, for example, Geoffrey took a further 1,000 marks into Poitou.¹⁴ Between 1208 and 1210, Geoffrey was once again back in the king's *domus*, this time quite clearly in the royal buttry. He authorised letters for the acquisition of the king's wine between January 1208 until the close rolls stop in John's ninth regnal year.¹⁵ In concert with the royal steward William de Cantilupe, he was a justice itinerant in Norfolk during July 1209.¹⁶ During this period, Geoffrey kept close to the king and appeared as a royal witness on no fewer than eighteen occasions during his stay with John.¹⁷

⁵ *Rot. Norm.*, pp. 46, 53, 55, 58.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 39 b (2), 41 b; *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 133 b, 139 b; *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 83.

⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 48; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 14 b.

⁹ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 147, 148 b, 151 b, 156 b, 157 b, 160, 161, 165; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 57.

¹⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 61 b.

¹¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 66.

¹² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 73.

¹³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 66.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 100 b, 104, 104 b–105, 106, 107 b, 110 b, 108 b.

¹⁶ *Feaft of Fines, Norfolk and Suffolk*, pp. 239, 240.

¹⁷ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 174 b, 175, 175 b, 176, 176 b, 180, 181 b, 182 b, 183 b (3), 184 b (2), 185 (3), 185 b (2).

The Household Knights of King John

In 1210, Geoffrey returned to his duties as a royal paymaster. During the campaign which John waged in the summer of 1210, Geoffrey, along with Henry fitz Count, issued some £2,500 in payment for the transports which took the army to Ireland.¹⁸ In the exchequer term of 1211, Geoffrey was allowed 60 shillings which he had paid for the carriage of stores to Ireland.¹⁹ In September 1210, Geoffrey returned to Ireland 'in nuntium domini regis'.²⁰ With the lacuna in the sources during this period, it is not possible to be certain about whether he remained in Ireland between 1210 and 1212 or returned to England. Geoffrey, however, was definitely in Ireland in the summer of 1212,²¹ where he remained as the king's bailiff and sheriff of Dublin.²² In the summer of 1215, he was recalled for the defence of the kingdom against John's barons. On his return from Ireland, Geoffrey was once again to be found in the king's presence, when he witnessed a further sixteen charters between June and mid-September 1215.²³ In September, he was dispatched to the papal curia to perform his final task for John before his death. Here he was to swear 'in animam nostram' for John in the agreement between the king and Richard's widow, Berengaria; with the knight Thomas of Erdington and the abbot of Beulieu, Geoffrey spoke on behalf of John against Stephen Langton and the baronial opposition.²⁴ It seems that Geoffrey managed to make the return journey to England where he witnessed one more royal charter before his death in 1216.²⁵

The lands which Geoffrey Lutterel managed to acquire through his service in the royal household make impressive reading. In 1203, Geoffrey received the reward which was to set himself and his family on the road to baronial status, when he took in marriage Frethesant, co-heir of the northern baron William Paine. This marriage brought to Geoffrey a quarter of the Paine fee in Hooton Paine, Yorkshire, valued at seven and a half knights' fees.²⁶ During 1204, he concentrated his energies in consolidating his claim to the barony and indulged in a multitude of legal wrangles. Since most of these cases ended amicably, they presumably reflect Geoffrey's desire to establish legal records for his claim to his share of the barony, rather than a concentrated attempt by

¹⁸ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 252.

¹⁹ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 89.

²⁰ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 230.

²¹ *Docs. of English History*, p. 233.

²² *St Mary's Cartularies, Dublin*, i, p. 249; *Register of St Thomas*, p. 17; 'Irish pipe roll', pp. 7-13; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 137, 146, 188 b, 191.

²³ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 210 (3), 211 (2), 212 b, 213 (2), 215 b, 216 (2), 216 b, 218 b, 219 (3).

²⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 181 b, 182 b (2); *Chron. Maj.*, ii, p. 633.

²⁵ *Foedera*, i, p. 140; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 323 b.

²⁶ *Early Yorks. Charters*, iv, p. 44; *Pipe Roll 5 John*, pp. 201 (3), 202, 203, 206, 211.

²⁷ *Book of Fees*, p. 490; Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 55.

his tenants to block his possession.²⁸ In 1205, Geoffrey obtained one knight's fee in Barton-le-Street in the North Riding of Yorkshire and thus began the reconstruction of the whole Painei barony which would be completed by his son by 1230.²⁹

In addition to the seven and a half knights' fees which comprised his share of the Painei inheritance, Geoffrey received the royal manors of Rothley, Kingshaugh, and Croxton.³⁰ He had fifteen bovates of land given to him by Gerbode d'Escaud in Gamston and Normanton on the Wolds, and sixteen bovates of land in Bridgeford and Keyworth by Gerard de Rodes confirmed by royal charter;³¹ he also held lands in Ireland.³² Geoffrey Luttrell's career illustrates with remarkable clarity the variety of tasks to which John might put his household knights; equally, his wealth and status show what rewards knights could receive from a successful career in royal service. Through the benefits of royal service, the Luttrell family were raised from a position of relative obscurity to the ranks of the baronial élite in the space of just one generation.

Equally successful in catapulting his family into the ranks of baronial elite by a history of long, loyal, and useful service was John Russell. But his career is valuable in showing us how a man might have to serve for a considerable length of time before his talents were noticed. John began his career as a sergeant in the household of Richard I and in 1199 he transferred to John's household, presumably at the same level.³³ John was a knight shortly after 1199, since by 1200 he was married to Rohesia de la Pomeroy, the widow of Henry II de la Pomeroy, a major Devonshire baron.³⁴ During the main part of John's reign, John Russell seems to have been a fighting knight. In May 1205, he was in royal service 'with horse and arms', though where and for what purpose was not made clear.³⁵ He went to Ireland in 1210, was with the king's army in September 1212, was at Canterbury in May

²⁸ *The Coucher Book of the Cistercian Abbey of Kirkstall*, ed. W. T. Lancaster and W. Paley Baildon (Thorpe Society, 8, 1904), pp. 9–10, 80; *Feet of Fines Yorks, John*, pp. 87–8; *Three Yorkshire Assize Rolls for the Reigns of King John and King Henry III*, ed. C. T. Clay (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, 44, 1911), pp. 3, 5, 12, 19, 23, 24, 25; *Pleas Before the King or his Justices*, i, nos. 902, 903, 911, 922, 923, 948, 976, 977, 1,010, 1,022, 1,024, 1,026; *Curia Regis Rolls*, iii, pp. 88, 89, 273, 286, 293, 342, 346.

²⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 48 b; *Red Book*, p. 491; *VCH Yorks.*, North Riding, i, p. 472; Stapleton, 'Historical details', pp. 24–5, 45–6, 89–90, 118–30; Maxwell-Lyte, 'Dunster and its lords', part 2, pp. 155–8.

³⁰ *Pipe Rolls 11 John*, p. 111; *7 John*, p. 176 (2); *Book of Fees*, pp. 223, 226; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 14.

³¹ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 91 b.

³² *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 144, 200.

³³ *Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 129; *Chancellor's Roll 8 Richard I*, p. 20.

³⁴ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 43; *Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 32.

³⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 31.

The Household Knights of King John

1213, and was summoned for the Poitevin campaign in 1214.³⁶ From 1213 onwards, King John seems to have put more trust in this particular household knight. In March 1213, John Russell was sent 'in nuntium domini regis' to William Marshal and John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, both of whom were in Ireland.³⁷ From July 1215 until July 1216, John seems to have been in constant attendance upon the king, witnessing nineteen charters during this one-year period.³⁸ In August 1215, he was responsible for the safe transportation of the king's seal.³⁹ He was with John on the winter campaign of 1215-16 in the north of England.⁴⁰

The last year of John's reign also saw a marked change in John Russell's financial position. Before 1215, John's rewards for his services had been relatively unimpressive. Some time before the spring of 1200, he had married Rohesia de la Pomeroy, the daughter of Thomas Bardulf and widow of Henry II de la Pomeroy.⁴¹ This marriage brought him tenements in Ashcombe and Stockley Pomeroy, Devon.⁴² Apart from half a hide of land in Kingston, Dorsetshire, as marshal of the king's buttery at Christmas and Pentecost,⁴³ and one virgate of land in Wiltshire by the service of two measures of wine to be dispensed at the four feasts of each year,⁴⁴ which he inherited from his father Ralph Russell, John's stock of lands remained unaltered until the civil war. Then, just as his service to John became more important and the king seemed to find John indispensable to his needs, John's rewards increased accordingly. In August 1215, he proffered 60 marks for wardship of the land and heir of Thomas fitz Henry, an amount for which he was later pardoned, a certain sign of high royal favour. This brought him a knight's fee in Corsley, Wiltshire.⁴⁵ In October 1215, he gained the lands of Alufi of Boughton in Kent.⁴⁶ In November 1215, John was granted wardship of one of the daughters and co-heirs of James de Neufmarché whom he married to his son Ralph.⁴⁷ This marriage

³⁶ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 177, 194, 217, 226; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, pp. 90, 95, 96, 101; *Docs. of English History*, p. 241.

³⁷ *Docs. of English History*, p. 257.

³⁸ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 212 b, 218 (2), 218 b (3), 219 (2), 219 b, 221 b, 222 b (3), 223 (3), 223 b (3).

³⁹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 152.

⁴⁰ Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', p. 17.

⁴¹ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 43; *Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 32; *Rot. Curia Regis*, i, pp. 274, 374; *Curia Regis Rolls*, i, pp. 240, 252, 287; *Placitonum*, pp. 26-26b, 27 b, 30.

⁴² *Rot. Fin.*, p. 43; *Pipe Rolls 3 John*, p. 32; *7 John*, p. 135; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 31, 40 b.

⁴³ *Book of Fees*, pp. 92, 342; *Red Book*, p. 546.

⁴⁴ *Red Book*, pp. 488, 484, 461.

⁴⁵ *Rot. Fin.*, pp. 566, 600; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 11; *VCH Wilts.*, viii, p. 15.

⁴⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 232.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 234 b, 237 b; Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 68.

brought to the Russell family nearly seventeen knights' fees in Gloucestershire, Somerset, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire; the union with the Neufmarché family placed the Russells well and truly amongst the most privileged and powerful landed élite of English society.⁴⁸ Throughout the civil war, John continued to receive escheated lands of those men who were in rebellion. He obtained the lands of Walter of Ashley in Wiltshire and all those rebels who held in the fee of James de Neufmarché.⁴⁹ In June 1216, John was granted Bradford, Dorsetshire, which had been held by one of King John's rebel household knights.⁵⁰

John Russell was one of the few former household knights of King John who moved smoothly into the household of Henry III.⁵¹ It seems likely that John's initial responsibilities lay in the household itself.⁵² As early as January 1217, he was named as the first of Henry III's stewards, a post which he later held with Eustace de Grenville.⁵³ In February 1217, John went with Walter de Verdun as part of the deputation sent by the regent to Philip d'Albini.⁵⁴ In June 1220, he was a witness to the marriage agreement between Henry and Alexander II of Scotland for Henry's sister, Joanna. The following month John began to appear in the records operating outside of the royal household when he was named by Henry III as surety for the king's intention to honour an agreement with Berengaria, widow of Richard I.⁵⁵ In October 1220, he went to Poitou to collect Joanna from the Lusignans.⁵⁶ In June 1221, he was placed in charge of Corfe castle after it had been extracted from Peter de Maulay.⁵⁷ In December 1222, he was briefly given the custody of the castles of the Peak and Bolsover.⁵⁸ In February 1223, John was made sheriff of Hampshire and custodian of Sherborne castle.⁵⁹ In December 1223, he gave up Sherborne castle and Hampshire to the bishop of Bath in exchange for control of Warwickshire and

⁴⁸ *Book of Fees*, pp. 20, 38, 39, 50, 79, 80, 85, 262, 381, 439, 442, 861, 875; *Pipe Rolls 2 Henry III*, p. 42 (2); *3 Henry III*, p. 161.

⁴⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 246 b, 281 b; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 54.

⁵⁰ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 276 b.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 345 b, 362. ⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 602.

⁵³ PRO, SC1/62/4; SC1/6/43; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 380 b, 383 b, 388, 432–432b, 502; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 361.

⁵⁴ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 32.

⁵⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 388, *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 235, 243–5.

⁵⁶ *Diplomatic Documents*, i, nos. 96, 98; Shirley, *Royal and other Historical Letters*, i, no. 135; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 255; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 432–432b, 432 b, 440–440b, 458 b, 459, 459 b, 598 b; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 245, 253.

⁵⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 460, 465 b, 468 b (2), 470, 471 b, 483, 483 b, 514; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 249–50.

⁵⁸ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 361, 365; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 530 b; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 284–5.

⁵⁹ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 364, 419; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 533, 542, 553, 573 b.

Leicestershire and Kenilworth castle, which had been in the custody of William de Cantilupe.⁶⁰ In May 1224, John, with Godfrey of Crowcombe, Ralph Gernun, and ten Poitevins, once again left England for Poitou, presumably to add to the county's defences.⁶¹ Whether John Russell died there or managed to make it back to England is uncertain, but nothing further is heard of him until the sheriff of Somerset was notified of John's death on 3 October 1224.⁶²

John Russell's career provides us with an excellent example of how a man's fortune might be made in royal service. It is from this Russell that the great Russell family traces its descent; it is clear that it was John Russell's service in the royal household which gave the family the impetus it needed to place the family amongst the most élite of English society.⁶³ But there is a more important lesson to be drawn from his career. John Russell began to amass landed wealth only after he had begun to move away from the mundane task of fighting for the king into areas which required skills other than that of splitting skulls. He did, however, have to spend a long apprenticeship of some fifteen years before he was given the opportunity to exercise his talents in other fields.

The career of Brian de Lisle illustrates for us the quite extraordinary usefulness that one individual could serve for the king, but Brian was a man with his own mind, too, as we shall see shortly. The Lisle family took its name from the Isle of Wight, where they had held Mottiston since at least the 1130s.⁶⁴ Brian was the son of Robert de Lisle, who, between 1194 and 1198, was steward of the honour of Eye for William de Longchamp, bishop of Ely; it was presumably this connection that enabled Brian to get his first foothold on the ladder of royal service.⁶⁵ Brian was in royal service on the continent by April 1200, and was first described as a royal household knight in November 1204.⁶⁶ In January 1205, Brian fined in 400 marks to have in marriage Grace, widow of Adam de Neville and heir of Thomas fitz William of Saleby, Lincolnshire. The pledges for Brian's fine read like a veritable who's who of King John's *familiares* and it is testament to the height to which Brian

⁶⁰ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 418, 419.

⁶¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 598 b.

⁶² *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 121; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 623 b, 648 b.

⁶³ Round, 'The origins of the Russells'.

⁶⁴ *The Charters of Quarr Abbey*, ed. S. F. Hockey (Isle of Wight County Record Office, 1991), nos. 1, 65, 357, 420, 108, 109; *VCH Hants*, v, p. 251. For a summary of Brian's career see Holt, *Northerners*, pp. 221–2.

⁶⁵ *Eye Priory Cartulary and Charters*, 2 vols., ed. V. Brown (Suffolk Records Society, 12–13, 1992–3), i, no. 313; ii, p. xi; *Rot. Curia Regis*, ii, p. 186; *Pipe Roll 8 John*, p. 97.

⁶⁶ *Rot. Curia Regis*, ii, p. 186; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 13 b.

had climbed in the royal circle.⁶⁷ Brian's marriage to Grace brought him her inheritance in Cuxwold, Saleby, East Rasen, Casthorpe, Tothby, Hainton, Barkwith, Strubby, and Dunham, Lincolnshire,⁶⁸ and her dower lands in Berkshire.⁶⁹

Throughout the whole of John's reign and on into the reign of Henry III, Brian was an extremely useful royal servant. In 1205, he became one of the custodians of William de Stuteville's lands;⁷⁰ when these lands were redeemed in 1206, Brian retained control of the vital northern strongholds of Knaresborough and Boroughbridge.⁷¹ It was Knaresborough that Brian was to turn into one of the key strongholds in the north, and it was at Knaresborough, too, that we see another side of Brian's character. It seems that Brian became a patron of the hermit St Robert of Knaresborough (d.1218), and was responsible for King John's benefaction to St Robert's community, and thus warranted a mention in the middle English metrical life of that saint.⁷² In addition to the Stuteville honour, Brian held custody, *inter alia*, of the lands of the archbishopric of York,⁷³ the bishopric of Lincoln,⁷⁴ the wapentake of the High Peak with its castle,⁷⁵ and Bolsover castle and the honour of Peverel;⁷⁶ he was also bailiff of the ports of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.⁷⁷

From 1212 onwards, Brian seems to have played an increasingly important role in the organisation of the royal armies. In May 1212, for example, he was sent to those gathered at Nottingham in response to John's summons to military service in order to give them their instructions.⁷⁸ The following spring, Brian can be found acting as the king's paymaster to knights gathered at Winchelsea.⁷⁹ At the end of May 1213, Brian accompanied the earl of Salisbury, the count of

⁶⁷ *Rot. Fin.*, pp. 240-1; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 17 b; a debt that was eventually discharged by 1210 (*Pipe Rolls 7 John*, p. 212; *8 John*, p. 97; *9 John*, pp. 12, 23; *10 John*, p. 89; *11 John*, p. 73; *12 John*, p. 24; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 421).

⁶⁸ *Book of Fees*, pp. 362, 1,003, 1,017, 1,034, 1,059, 1,062, 1,066.

⁶⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 17 b; Farrer, *Honors and Knights' Fees*, ii, pp. 85, 151-2.

⁷⁰ *Pipe Rolls 7 John*, pp. 38-40; *8 John*, pp. 217-20; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 43, 57 b, 65 b (3), 66 (2), 66 b.

⁷¹ *Pipe Rolls 8 John*, p. 191; *9 John*, p. 78; *10 John*, p. 140; *11 John*, p. 126; *12 John*, p. 148; *13 John*, pp. 43, 88-93; *14 John*, pp. 26, 168-70; *16 John*, pp. 66-7, 85; *17 John*, pp. 13-14; *3 Henry III*, p. 184; *5 Henry III*, pp. 115, 127; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 83 b, 84, 105 b, 144.

⁷² *The Metrical Life of St Robert of Knaresborough*, ed. J. Bazire (Early English Text Society, 228, 1953).

⁷³ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 88 b, 89; *Pipe Rolls 14 John*, pp. 2-3, 4, 68-9; *17 John*, pp. 121-3; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 138 b, 248 b.

⁷⁴ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, pp. 57, 58.

⁷⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 87; *Pipe Roll 14 Henry III*, pp. 78, 90.

⁷⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 80 b; *Pipe Rolls 11 John*, pp. 111-12; *12 John*, pp. 126, 127; *16 John*, p. 67; *17 John*, pp. 11-12; *14 Henry III*, pp. 78, 88.

⁷⁷ *Pipe Rolls 13 John*, pp. 48, 59, 186; *14 John*, pp. 4-5.

⁷⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 92 b. ⁷⁹ *Pipe Roll 17 John*, pp. 92-3.

Boulogne, Hugh de Boves, and Henry fitz Count to Flanders, where they fell upon the French fleet at Damme and won a famous victory.⁸⁰ In July 1213, Brian can be found moving money and military hardware from places of storage in preparation for the intended campaign in Poitou.⁸¹ His appointment as steward of the royal household sometime around 3 October 1213 merely served to emphasise this aspect of his activities for the king.⁸² On 17 November, the sheriff of Kent was ordered to find, 'without prize', passage for Brian and Falkes de Bréauté.⁸³ Other letters close make it clear that Brian and Falkes were destined for Flanders where they were to take 3,000 marks for the 'defence of Flanders'.⁸⁴ By 26 December, Brian was back in England when he was again involved in the movement of large quantities of cash-reserves from places of storage.⁸⁵ In April 1214, he was sending crossbow bolts to Portsmouth for transportation overseas. These crossbow bolts had been made at Knaresborough, which was something of a centre for the production of these deadly weapons of war,⁸⁶ as it was to become for John's siege-engines.⁸⁷ Brian was with John at Yarmouth, Isle of Wight, on 8 February 1214 just as the king was about to leave for Poitou;⁸⁸ by 6 May 1214, Brian had joined his king on the continent.⁸⁹ In Poitou, Brian stayed close to the king's side, witnessing seventeen royal charters, and he returned to England in John's entourage.⁹⁰

As a key commander in the north, Brian obviously played an important part in the civil war; he was, after all, castellan of four of the more important northern castles – Knaresborough, Boroughbridge, Bolsover, and the Peak – and custodian of the archbishopric of York.⁹¹ He acted as a paymaster to sergeants in the north in April 1215,⁹² and again in February 1216.⁹³ In February 1216, he was authorised to receive penitent rebels and give them letters of safe conduct to the king;⁹⁴ some of whom he received in Lincolnshire in the March.⁹⁵ In addition, we get a hint that he raised money from the citizens of York in order to pay the expenses of knights, sergeants, and crossbowmen who were under his command.⁹⁶ He acted as a gaoler in the north; for

⁸⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 99.

⁸¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, pp. 138 b, 148.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 154.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 139 b.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139 b (3).

⁸⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 107; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 158 b.

⁸⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 143, 148, 150.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 178 b.

⁸⁸ *Rot. Chart.*, p. 200.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 197 b, 198 b, 199 b (4), 200 (2), 200 b (4), 201 (2), 201 b (2), 202 b.

⁹¹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 147 b, 164; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 247, 248 b; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 574.

⁹² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 195 b.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 249 b.

⁹⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 167 b; Holt, *Northemers*, p. 136.

⁹⁵ *Rot. Fin.*, pp. 588–9; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 264 b.

⁹⁶ *Pipe Roll 5 Henry III*, p. 139; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 184 b, 187 b.

example, on 16 April 1215, he was told to release all prisoners in his custody who were not 'militēs' or 'gentiles'.⁹⁷

There was another side to Brian's character: he was evidently a somewhat difficult royal servant, even if his services proved invaluable. In 1205, for example, the sheriff of York was ordered to inquire into complaints that Brian and others of the king's *fideles* had been improperly operating the York mint 'contra assisam cambii domini regis et legem et consuetudinem regni'.⁹⁸ The sheriff's report on this incident does not survive, but in 1207, Brian fined in the very substantial sum of £100 and three war-horses 'pro habenda benevolentia regis'.⁹⁹ Evidently, Brian was in very serious trouble with the king. Brian was once again on the wrong side of King John when on 1 March 1209, he was suddenly and unaccountably disseised of all his custodies, most of which were assigned to the up-and-coming royal household knight Robert of Burgate.¹⁰⁰ Brian must have come back very quickly into royal favour because by 31 May 1209, he was entertaining at the king's expense a squire of Duke Henry of Saxony.¹⁰¹ During the civil war, John repeatedly ordered Brian to give up custody of the Peak castle to Ranulf of Chester and then to the earl of Derby, but to no avail. Brian was determined not to give up his custody to anyone, and the result was that John gave the earl of Derby permission to wage war on Brian.¹⁰² This 'shoddy affair' continued into the minority, with William Marshal issuing letters patent on behalf of Henry III as 'reitoris nostri et regni nostri' on 18 November 1216 ordering Brian to release the Peak 'just as John our father ordered you to do'.¹⁰³ Brian's activities as constable of Knaresborough during the civil war came under scrutiny in the mid-1220s when it became clear that he had acted arbitrarily and to his own profit on a number of occasions.¹⁰⁴

Despite these bouts of disobedience, Brian continued to be steadfastly loyal to the royalist cause, acting as a royal commander in the north during the civil war.¹⁰⁵ On 23 May 1217, he was given custody of Knaresborough and Boroughbridge until Henry III came of age ('annum etatis nostre completum').¹⁰⁶ The role for which Brian is best

⁹⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 133–133 b.

⁹⁸ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 322.

⁹⁹ *Pipe Rolls 9 John*, p. 28; *10 John*, p. 87; *11 John*, p. 73; *12 John*, p. 24; *14 John*, p. 106; *16 John*, p. 148; *3 Henry III*, p. 121; *4 Henry III*, p. 92; *5 Henry III*, p. 148.

¹⁰⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 89 (4).

¹⁰¹ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 113.

¹⁰² Holt, *Northerners*, p. 140.

¹⁰³ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, pp. 100, 170. Interestingly, Brian's habit of hanging onto castles came up again when Henry tried to reassume control of his castles in 1223. Brian proved extremely reluctant to give up Knaresborough castle to the archbishop of York (*Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 418, 425).

¹⁰⁵ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 48–9, 93, 102, 118; see also Carpenter, *Minority*.

¹⁰⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 308 b.

known in the reign of Henry III is that of chief forester; however, this part of his career had begun earlier in John's reign. In May 1207, he was appointed chief forester under Hugh de Neville for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, a position that he continued to hold until it was given to Matilda de Cauz in November 1217.¹⁰⁷ In February 1221, Brian was made chief justice of the forests of the whole of England.¹⁰⁸ Under Hubert de Burgh, Brian did not fare well. During the resumption of royal castles in December 1223, he was ordered to relinquish control over Knaresborough, Bolsover, and the Peak, castles which he had struggled so long and so hard to keep.¹⁰⁹ In January 1224, Brian lost the position of chief forester to Hugh de Neville, which must have irked this staunch loyalist since Hugh had been guilty of deserting King John at a crucial moment in the civil war. Although Brian continued to act as one of Hugh's deputy foresters, going on eyres in 1225, 1226, 1227, and 1229, he seems to have been excluded from the royal circle at least until 1229.¹¹⁰ Then in October 1229, Brian came back as chief forester for the counties in the north and east of England,¹¹¹ at the same time regaining control over the Peak castle;¹¹² we must presume that he also regained the king's favour. In 1230, Brian joined his king on the campaign in Brittany, playing a part in the organisation of the royal forces, a role with which he would have been familiar from his time as King John's steward.¹¹³ In 1231, Brian was back conducting forest eyres in Northumbria.¹¹⁴

Revenge against Hubert de Burgh came for Brian in 1232, when he attached himself to Peter des Roches' party in the bishop's plan to remove Hubert from the justiciarship.¹¹⁵ It was during this time that Brian was the recipient of a series of lifetime grants. He got the Peak castle, something he had very obviously been coveting for most of his career;¹¹⁶ he also received the sheriffdom of York 'ad totam vitam

¹⁰⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 72 b, 73; *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 123. For a general survey of the forests see C. R. Young, *The Royal Forests of Medieval England* (Leicester, 1979).

¹⁰⁸ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 282, 285; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 475 b; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 236, 252, 277–9, 337.

¹⁰⁹ Carpenter, *Minority*, p. 326.

¹¹⁰ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, pp. 423, 424, 567–9, 575; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, pp. 49, 73 b (2), 80 b (2), 151 b, 207 b–208; *Close Rolls 1227–31*, p. 208; Carpenter, *Minority*, pp. 343, 354.

¹¹¹ *Patent Rolls 1225–32*, p. 273; Shirley, *Royal and other Historical Letters*, i, pp. 359–60.

¹¹² *Patent Rolls 1225–32*, p. 270.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 331; *Cal. Lib. Rolls 1226–40*, p. 179; Sanders, *Feudal Military Service*, p. 125.

¹¹⁴ *Close Rolls 1227–31*, p. 511.

¹¹⁵ D. A. Carpenter, 'The fall of Hubert de Burgh', *Journal of British Studies*, 19 (1980), pp. 1–17, and in his *The Reign of Henry III* (London, 1996), pp. 45–60.

¹¹⁶ *Patent Rolls 1225–32*, p. 460

suam',¹¹⁷ and Bolsover castle.¹¹⁸ Such grants are a sure sign that a faction in the royal court had completely subsumed the king to their will, for no king worthy of the name would give up so much without a struggle, even to the greatest of his servants. The collapse of Peter des Roches' regime in 1234 marked the end of Brian's period of influence in royal service. In June that year, he was ordered to hand over Bolsover to Richard Siward, which, predictably, Brian was unwilling to do.¹¹⁹ In the end, it did not matter to Brian. On 15 August, he received licence to make a will and to have free disposition of his movables; on 18 August, the sheriff of Yorkshire was ordered to take into the king's hands Brian's lands; and on 6 September, Grace, Brian's widow, was given seisin of her dower lands.¹²⁰ Brian's heirs were his sister Alice, wife of Thomas le Bret, William of Glamorgan, son of his sister Constance, the man who got the Lisle ancestral home at Mottiston on the Isle of Wight, and Ralph de Slopham, son of his sister Annabel.¹²¹

The career of the household knight Henry IV de la Pomeroy presents us with an example of a man whose family were well established amongst the baronial élite by the time that he joined John's household. The Pomeroy lands amounted to some thirty-two knights' fees in Devon,¹²² a knight's fee at Calstock, Cornwall,¹²³ and also Carhampton, Somerset, in chief from the king.¹²⁴ The family record of royal service can be traced back to the early twelfth century. Henry's great-grandfather, Henry I de la Pomeroy, served in the household of King Henry I and he was leader of the king's household troops on a number of occasions.¹²⁵ It is to be presumed that Henry IV's father, Henry III de la Pomeroy, also served in the royal household in some capacity since he witnessed three of King John's charters, and was constable of the knights of Devon and Cornwall who went to Poitou in 1206.¹²⁶ Henry IV de la Pomeroy came to his inheritance in 1207, but since he was unable to find either the money or sureties for the fine his lands were placed in the custody of William Brewer.¹²⁷ Henry recovered his land in 1210 and it seems likely that he entered royal

¹¹⁷ *Cal. Patent Rolls 1232-47*, pp. 15, 28.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41. ¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 56.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 263; *Close Rolls 1231-34*, p. 512.

¹²¹ *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, pp. 265-6; *Close Rolls 1231-34*, p. 521; *VCH Hants.*, v, p. 251.

¹²² *Red Book*, pp. 162, 558; *Book of Fees*, pp. 1,307-19.

¹²³ *Red Book*, p. 612. ¹²⁴ *Book of Fees*, p. 83.

¹²⁵ *Dialogus de Scaccario*, p. 134; Powley, *The House of De La Pomerai*, pp. 15-16; Chibnall, 'Mercenaries and the *familia regis* under Henry I', p. 19.

¹²⁶ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 16, 115 b, 130 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 71 b.

¹²⁷ *Pipe Roll 9 John*, p. 77; *Rot. Fin.*, pp. 405, 407, 435; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 23; *Pipe Roll 10 John*, p. 61.

service at this time, though he was not actually described as a household knight until 1214.¹²⁸

Henry IV de la Pomeroy had a short and chequered career in royal service. He went on the Irish campaign in 1210, he was at Winchelsea in May 1213 in readiness for the expected invasion of Philip Augustus, and he went to Poitou in 1214.¹²⁹ In February 1215, he was sent into Cornwall to speak on John's behalf.¹³⁰ Later that same year he was made sheriff of Devon and constable of Exeter castle, though he seems not to have held these posts for long.¹³¹ Towards the end of 1215, he was given custody of the lands of a number of rebels. He received the lands of Roger de Reimes in Devon and Roger de Kaynes in Dorset, Somerset, and Cornwall.¹³² In March 1216, he received custody of William des Préaux's land in Devon, for the brief period in which William was in rebellion.¹³³ It must have been shortly after this that Henry himself rebelled since nothing further is heard of him until his return to the royalist camp in September 1216.¹³⁴ Though seized of his lands, Henry never made it back into the ranks of the royal *familiares* either in John or Henry III's reigns, and he lived out the remaining five years of his life in relative obscurity.¹³⁵

In comparison to the careers of those we have seen so far, that of Henry IV de la Pomeroy seems mediocre. Henry did little in the way of important royal service, with the notable exception of the year 1215. Perhaps because his position and wealth were already assured, the incentive to be a loyal and hard-working royal servant was simply not there. He was the heir to a major west country barony and had little need of the king's beneficence to make his way in the world. With the exception of an outstanding debt at the exchequer of over £587 dating from his father's lifetime, Henry's position in society meant that John had few levers with which to manipulate him.¹³⁶

Thomas Sturmy provides us with an example of a man who, though he moved away from a role as a simple fighting knight, nonetheless failed to reap the benefits that he might have expected from such service, and as a result he was forced to look elsewhere for patronage.

¹²⁸ *Pipe Rolls 12 John*, p. 166; *13 John*, p. 130; *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 205, 221; *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, p. 170.

¹²⁹ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 205, 221; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 93; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 200 b; *Pipe Rolls 16 John*, p. 63 (2); *2 Henry III*, p. 88.

¹³⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 128 b.

¹³¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 199 b–200; *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 135 b–136; *Memo. Roll 10 John*, p. 137.

¹³² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 243 b, 244 b.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 250 b. ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

¹³⁵ He died at some point before 3 November 1221 (*Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 477 b–478).

¹³⁶ *Pipe Roll 13 John*, p. 256.

Thomas Sturmy was a younger son of Geoffrey Sturmy, who held by sergeanty in Burbage and Cowsfield, Wiltshire.¹³⁷ Geoffrey Sturmy was a close adherent of Count John,¹³⁸ it seems likely that Thomas was introduced into John's household by his father. It is here in the royal household that we meet Thomas moving from the position of squire to that of knight of the royal household.¹³⁹ The following year Thomas was sent to Poitou with John's illegitimate son Geoffrey.¹⁴⁰ In March 1208, Thomas was given temporary custody of the bishopric of Chichester until the vacancy was filled in 1209,¹⁴¹ the abbey of Hyde, near Winchester,¹⁴² and the priories of Sele and Rusper.¹⁴³ In the years 1209–10, 1212, and 1213–14, Thomas was to be found in the king's army.¹⁴⁴ From June 1213 until sometime after 21 April 1215, Thomas performed duties related to the king's buttery. In 1214 and 1215, he was responsible for acquiring the king's wine and the transportation of the royal buttery.¹⁴⁵ During this period, Thomas was occasionally to be found attesting the king's charters.¹⁴⁶ In the period of the civil war, he was placed in control of some of the important south coast ports.¹⁴⁷ But in July 1216, Thomas briefly flirted with the rebel cause only to return to the king's side at the beginning of August 1216.¹⁴⁸ This desertion of John in his hour of need marked the effective end of Thomas' career in royal service, and in 1218 he joined those English knights who embarked for the fifth crusade.¹⁴⁹

Despite all I have said about the quantity and quality of the rewards which John's knights received when they began to perform non-martial duties for the king, Thomas failed to obtain any sizeable rewards from King John. Why this was so is not clear, but the results of John's failure to properly reward this knight are very clear indeed. In 1212, Thomas managed to obtain custody of the heir of Walter Sturmy, presumably a kinsman; as a direct result of this custody, he also received wardship over the heir of Jocelyn of Shawford in 1214.¹⁵⁰ During the civil war,

¹³⁷ *Book of Fees*, pp. 11, 13; *Pipe Roll 1 John*, p. 173; *Rot. Fin.*, pp. 473, 478–9; *Curia Regis Rolls*, xiii, no. 115.

¹³⁸ *Book of Fees*, pp. 11, 13; *Pipe Roll 9 Richard I*, p. 216; Preen, 'The acta of Count John', no. 158.

¹³⁹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 3; *Pipe Roll 6 John*, p. 121.

¹⁴⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 53.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 80 b; Cheney, 'King John's reaction to the Interdict in England', p. 140.

¹⁴² *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 111. ¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁴⁴ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 126, 181, 189, 203, 212, 223; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, pp. 91, 94; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 166.

¹⁴⁵ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 140, 158 b, 159, 196.

¹⁴⁶ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 200, 206 b, 199 b, 201.

¹⁴⁷ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 170 b, 177, 178; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 259.

¹⁴⁸ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 191; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, 280 b; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 100.

¹⁴⁹ *Patent Rolls 1216–25*, p. 158; Powell, *Anatomy of a Crusade, 1213–21*, p. 243.

¹⁵⁰ *Pipe Roll 14 John*, p. 60; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 166 b.

The Household Knights of King John

Thomas received just one escheat, that of William of Pontefract in Stepney in Middlesex and Latchingdon in Essex.¹⁵¹ This was the sum total of his landed rewards and presumably because of this, Thomas was forced to seek elsewhere for a patron who would look after his needs. It seems that Thomas found this patron in the person of Walter de Beauchamp, a powerful Worcestershire baron. Thomas held a knight's fee of Walter de Beauchamp in Rushock, Worcestershire.¹⁵² It also seems likely that Thomas obtained his bride from Beauchamp, since his wife's dower land of Little Cooksey, Worcestershire, also belonged to the Beauchamp barony.¹⁵³ Since Thomas' defection to the barons' side in 1216 occurred at the same time as Walter de Beauchamp's, and Thomas was seized with the tenants of the Beauchamp barony on his return to the royalist side, it seems likely that Thomas was looking elsewhere for his patronage.¹⁵⁴ We shall never know exactly why John chose to ignore the needs of this particular knight, but the example of Thomas Sturmy does show that those knights whose services extended beyond the martial sphere could not always count on receiving great rewards from the king.

Unlike those household knights mentioned so far, Robert of Ropsley exploded onto the scene from a point of relative obscurity only to have his career in the royal household close in disgrace when he sided with the rebel cause at the end of the reign. The first mention of Robert occurred in April 1203 when he was serving in Normandy as part of the king's *familia*.¹⁵⁵ From at least August 1204 until March 1208, when he gave up the castle to Gerard de Athies, Robert controlled Bristol castle from where he took charge of the king's store of treasure and wine.¹⁵⁶ With the castle, he also controlled the royal manors of Winterbourne, Gloucestershire,¹⁵⁷ and Barton near Bristol.¹⁵⁸ During the same period Robert was made custodian of the earldom of Leicester,¹⁵⁹ sheriff of Leicestershire and Warwickshire,¹⁶⁰ controller of the royal forests in

¹⁵¹ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 254, 255 b.

¹⁵² *Book of Fees*, p. 140; *Red Book*, p. 567; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, p. 135 b; *Curia Regis Rolls*, xiii, no. 115.

¹⁵³ *Book of Fees*, p. 140; *Curia Regis Rolls*, vii, pp. 22, 37.

¹⁵⁴ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 178, 191; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 280 b; *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 100.

¹⁵⁵ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 27 b.

¹⁵⁶ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 6 b–7, 10, 20 b, 36, 44 b, 45 b, 50 (3), 57, 57 b, 58, 58 b, 60 b, 66–7, 67 b, 77 b, 82, 92 (2), 105, 105 b.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 20.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 41 b; *Pipe Rolls 7 John*, pp. 102–3; *8 John*, pp. 17, 20; *9 John*, p. 217; *10 John*, p. 20; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 105, 105 b.

¹⁵⁹ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 68 b; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 47 b, 48 b, 49 b, 55 b, 68 b, 83 b, 86 b, 99; *Pipe Roll 12 John*, p. 92; *Book of Fees*, p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 74; *Rot. Fin.*, p. 319; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 68 b.

Warwickshire, Leicestershire, and Lincolnshire,¹⁶¹ and a justice in Warwickshire.¹⁶² Between July 1207 and 1210, Robert was also placed in charge of the royal castle of Kenilworth.¹⁶³ In 1210, he went to Ireland with John, but between then and 1214 Robert seems to have been out of royal favour.¹⁶⁴ During the Poitevin campaign, Robert was once more brought back into the fold and appears to have played a major part in the planning and execution of this campaign.¹⁶⁵ During the civil war, Robert remained with the king until shortly after Runnymede, at which point he joined the rebel cause.¹⁶⁶ Little is known of his activities during this period, except that his main focus seems to have been in Lincolnshire in concert with Gilbert de Gant. Robert did not make peace with the royal side until after the final defeat at Lincoln.¹⁶⁷ He appeared once more for the king in the summer of 1218 when he was amongst those mustered at Stamford.¹⁶⁸ Robert was dead, however, by the end of this year; he left his widow pregnant.¹⁶⁹

Robert was a Lincolnshire man whose demesne manor of Ropsley was held of William d'Albini of Belvoir, as was his manor of Mere in the same county.¹⁷⁰ He also inherited from his father Worthington and Newbold, Leicestershire.¹⁷¹ In addition to these manors, he held Frampton and Donington in Lincolnshire from the Richmond honour which had been given to him by King John.¹⁷² By 1206, Robert was married to Mabel de Limsey, daughter of Gerard de Limsey and widow of Hugh Bardulf.¹⁷³ As her dower lands, Mabel brought to the marriage Carlton-by-Lincoln, Scotton, and Riseholme, Lincolnshire, and Ilketshall and Bungay, Suffolk.¹⁷⁴ As her marriage portion from the Limsey barony, Mabel also brought to the marriage two knights' fees in

¹⁶¹ *Rot. Fin.*, p. 319. ¹⁶² *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 72, 74.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 75 b; *Pipe Roll 13 John*, pp. 190–1.

¹⁶⁴ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 205, 225.

¹⁶⁵ *Rot. Chart.*, pp. 196, 197, 197 b, 199 b (4), 200 b (2), 201 (3).

¹⁶⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, p. 137 b; *Chron. Maj.*, ii, pp. 589, 663; *Maréchal*, lines 16,686–702; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 243 b.

¹⁶⁷ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 320 b, 357 b.

¹⁶⁸ Sanders, *Feudal Military Service*, p. 112.

¹⁶⁹ *Rolls of the Justices in Eyre for Lincolnshire*, no. 390.

¹⁷⁰ *Book of Fees*, pp. 184, 178.

¹⁷¹ *Curia Regis Rolls*, vi, pp. 95–6, 175–6, 240, 246, 312; A. Hamilton, ed., 'Leicestershire documents temp. King John', *Associated Architectural Societies' Reports and Papers*, 1917, 34, part 1 (1917), pp. 170–1.

¹⁷² *Book of Fees*, p. 194; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 1 b.

¹⁷³ *Curia Regis Rolls*, iv, pp. 244, 304; vi, pp. 168, 190, 205; *Pipe Rolls 9 John*, p. 99; *10 John*, p. 33; *2 Henry III*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁴ *Feet of Fines for the County of Lincoln for the Reign of King John, 1199–1216*, ed. M. S. Walker (Pipe Roll Society, new series, 29, 1954), p. 226.

Amwell, Hertfordshire;¹⁷⁵ three knights' fees in Devon;¹⁷⁶ land in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire;¹⁷⁷ and later control of David de Limsey's manor of Bradwell, Oxfordshire, and his land in Norfolk.¹⁷⁸ Quite how Robert managed to gain entry into the royal household at such a high level from the very beginning of his career remains a mystery. Equally his sudden fall from grace in 1210 also remains unexplained; however, Robert was not the only household knight to fall out with John, though he did remain out of favour for longer than most. But his defection to the baronial side in 1215 can be explained by his very close connections with the rebel Gilbert de Gant.

Having explored some of John's more interesting household knights, it is now time to look at one man whose career distinguishes him as the proverbial fighting knight, whose role in the royal household was largely limited to this function. Robert Barat entered the ranks of the household knights sometime before the summer of 1209.¹⁷⁹ He was probably an illegitimate son of Walter de Cantilupe, and therefore half-brother to the royal steward, William de Cantilupe.¹⁸⁰ He had a totally uneventful career, joining the royal forces on the Scottish campaign in 1209 and then on the Irish campaign in 1210;¹⁸¹ he was with William de Cantilupe in Wales in 1212,¹⁸² and received one escheat during the civil war.¹⁸³ After John's death, Robert's career went into terminal decline and nothing of any relevance is heard of him until a notice of his death sometime before 31 January 1223.¹⁸⁴

The rewards that Robert received for his services included the royal manor of Coxwell, Berkshire, which he held with his brother, William de Cantilupe, between 1201 and 1205. In 1205 this manor was given to John's new Cistercian foundation of Beaulieu.¹⁸⁵ Robert held one virgate of land in Coombe, Wiltshire, in 1199, though for how long is not clear.¹⁸⁶ In 1208, he fined in 200 marks and two valuable horses for the widow of Thomas de Ria.¹⁸⁷ By the time of his death in 1223, he held lands in Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, and Leicestershire.¹⁸⁸

¹⁷⁵ *Book of Fees*, p. 123. ¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 560; *Pipe Roll 2 Henry III*, p. 51.

¹⁷⁷ *Curia Regis Rolls*, vi, pp. 41, 95; *Placitorum*, pp. 76 b–77.

¹⁷⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, pp. 208, 243 b, 285 b, 384 b, 387 b.

¹⁷⁹ *Rot. Lib. John*, p. 125.

¹⁸⁰ *Pipe Rolls 3 John*, p. 201; *4 John*, p. 5; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 531 b; *Ex. Rot. Fin.*, i, p. 314; *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, ii, p. 37 b.

¹⁸¹ *Rot. Lib. John*, pp. 125, 180, 189, 203, 212, 223.

¹⁸² *Pipe Roll 17 John*, p. 90.

¹⁸³ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 279 b. ¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 531 b.

¹⁸⁵ *Pipe Roll 3 John*, p. 201; *Monasticon Anglicanum*, v, p. 683.

¹⁸⁶ *Rot. Curia Regis*, ii, p. 142.

¹⁸⁷ *Pipe Roll 10 John*, p. 89.

¹⁸⁸ *Rot. Litt. Claus.*, i, p. 531 b.

Evidently the knights who did best out of royal service were those who performed extensive non-martial functions for the king. Men like Robert Barat, who did little but turn out for the king's campaigns, received insignificant landed rewards. Those knights who generally did well out of royal service were those who went on diplomatic missions, served as castellans and sheriffs, and took on duties as itinerant justices. Moreover, the knights whom John seems to have favoured for extensive non-martial duties tended to be those who held little or nothing before entering royal service. Henry IV de la Pomeroy, for example, did pursue some custodial work, but he was not used extensively in this capacity, nor did he receive great rewards from John. On the other hand, Geoffrey Luttrell, though his origins were lowly, was employed in a multitude of tasks and received particularly large rewards from John. These two knights have an important lesson to teach us. John's inclination was to place his trust in men he could control. We have already seen how the king used rewards as an incentive to loyal service. This method of exercising control could work only when the household knight had everything to lose and everything to gain in royal service. The size and quality of the rewards which each knight received depended upon his ability and loyalty. Men like Geoffrey Luttrell who came to royal service with little or no land were therefore easy to manipulate. Henry IV de la Pomeroy and his ilk were not amenable to control in the same way.

There is, however, one word of caution which must be added at this point. The example of Thomas Sturmy warns us against assuming that all those household knights who were employed in non-martial capacities received large rewards from King John. Thomas quite patently did not benefit from his spell in the royal household and was forced to look to another master for his sustenance. The rewards which placed men like Geoffrey Luttrell and John Russell into the ranks of the English landed élites were not always dispensed, no matter how deserving the cause.

CONCLUSION

In this book I have focused on the knightly establishment of the household of King John in order to explore the nature of Angevin governance in general, and John's style of kingship in particular. What I hope to have shown is that the group of men whom contemporaries called *milites de familia regis* were essential to the maintenance of John's rule. These men undertook a multitude of tasks for the king, and by their presence in his entourage, they confirmed his status and standing in society. The body of king's knights was so much larger than the body of retainers his barons could muster that, when they were gathered together, their presence must have been overwhelming. William Marshal, for example, who was earl of Pembroke and one of the leading magnates of the realm, had a retinue of around ten household knights.¹ Roger de Quency, earl of Winchester and constable of Scotland, employed about twenty-eight household knights

¹ Crouch, *William Marshal*, pp. 137–8, a figure which makes one question the two hundred knights his son was supposed to provide as one of the twenty-five barons of Magna Carta (C. R. Cheney, 'The twenty-five barons of Magna Carta', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 50 (1968), pp. 280–307; see also J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta* (Cambridge, 2nd edn, 1992), pp. 478–80). The figures in this document seem to me wholly fictitious and a result of wishful thinking on the part of those who drew them up. The total number of knights in the manuscript printed by Cheney was calculated at 1,183 (corrected by him to 1,074). It would be nice to think that the rebels could muster a force of this size, but surely an army of over 1,000 knights is unlikely. John mustered around 800 knights for the Irish campaign in 1210 (Church, 'The 1210 campaign in Ireland', pp. 45–57). The armies that mustered at Stamford in 1218 and at Portsmouth in 1229 numbered no more than 600 knights (Sanders, *Feudal Military Service*, pp. 108–9, 121). The muster roll from December 1215 shows that John put in the field against the Northerners just over 400 knights (Church, 'The earliest English muster roll', pp. 1–17). If the barons really could muster over 1,000 fighting knights, what need had they of Louis's forces, and why were they losing the campaign before Louis arrived in May 1216? The answer must surely be that the figures in the manuscript printed by Cheney are unrealistic.

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during a forty-five-year period between 1219 and 1264.² John, on the other hand, could muster a force that approached a hundred household knights.

These men were not just in the royal entourage to add weight to the king's prestige and his military presence in the realm. It is clear that the royal household knights had a central role to play in the administration of war. They were responsible for organising the troops, dealing with matters of discipline, leading contingents on campaign, and no doubt acting as military advisers. They also took charge of the disbursement of moneys to those in the king's armies. In addition, these men can be found playing a crucial role in the conduct of government. They helped govern the Angevin realm both at home and abroad by acting as castellans of important royal castles, as escheators of confiscated lands, and as royal diplomats in foreign courts. In short, the knights of King John's household played a vital part at the very centre of political power; they functioned as the executive arm of John's administration.

The importance of the men who have formed the focus of this study to John's administration is more than amply demonstrated by the rich rewards that many of them acquired through their service in the royal household. Many of those who served in the ranks of the *milites de familia regis* were able to acquire the rich widows and heirs who propelled them and their families into the ranks of the landed élite of English society. It was the potential for these rich rewards which made service in the royal households of the Angevin kings so attractive. The men who have formed the basis of this study did not serve in return for piffling rewards, such as wages, money-fiefs, robes, and allowances of food at the king's expense (although let us not forget that grants of this nature *were* important, because they made manifest a man's special standing in the king's household); rather, each man served in the hope that he would receive a gift from the king which would make his fortune and secure his and his family's future. In Angevin England it was not the streets of London that were paved with gold; it was the path of royal service.

But entry into the clique of the *milites de familia regis* was not easy to achieve. Personal recommendation, clientage, and patronage were the stepping-stones to a career in royal service, for without an introduction from someone in royal circles, a man would never be invited to a seat at the king's table. This is perhaps not surprising. The practice of

² G. G. Simpson, 'The *familia* of Roger de Quency, earl of Winchester and constable of Scotland', in *Essays in the Nobility of Medieval Scotland*, ed. K. J. Stringer (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 107; and Stringer, *Earl David of Huntingdon*, pp. 166–7, both found it difficult to identify any more than a handful of the earl's household knights.

monarchy was, after all, personal, and Angevin kingship in particular was about the exercise of the royal will. Angevin kings, therefore, needed men who would do their bidding without question. The men whom they created were precisely the men to do that will; 'go to William Brewer, for he will fully explain my wishes to you', King John is reported to have said to abbot-elect Hugh of Bury St Edmunds in 1215.³ William Brewer was not, of course, a household knight, but he had been made powerful and wealthy by King John, and King John could trust William to know his will.⁴ Those men who were household knights were equally trusted to know John's mind. In 1215, Innocent III was told that the household knight Geoffrey Luttrell would swear 'in animam nostram' ('on our soul') for John that he would observe the agreement between himself and Berengaria, Richard's widow.⁵ In 1212, Brian de Lisle was given letters patent instructing those summoned to Nottingham 'to believe what he says to you on our behalf', and in May 1213, he was given the same seal of approval for the negotiations with Ferrand count of Flanders.⁶ When many missions were so secret that the clerks who issued the letters of credence occasionally admitted their ignorance of the purpose of the journey, trustworthy men were a must. It is hardly surprising, then, that King John wanted to know the men who were to perform these and other important tasks for him.

But knowledge of an individual and trust in him did not always bring lasting loyalty. At the end of John's reign, when civil war tore asunder the very fabric of English government and society, too many of John's knights deserted their lord for the baronial opposition. For many of the knights who betrayed their king, local ties of neighbourhood, faction, family, and community proved crucial in persuading them to join the rebel cause. John's policy of placing his men in the localities had been essential to the functioning of his administration, but it now proved to be a liability. Though at the centre of power, his knights remained local boys. These men had been amongst the most privileged members of society, and had enjoyed the 'warmth of royal favour'.⁷ Given their privileged access to John, they stood to benefit from his continued presence as king. The only contender for the English throne whilst John was alive was a Frenchman with whom they had no intimacy. Under Prince Louis's rulership, these men would have had no access to the fount of royal largesse. Moreover, since this was a society which valued loyalty to one's lord above all other manly virtues, their betrayal was all

³ *The Chronicle of the Election of Hugh Abbot of Bury St Edmunds and Later Bishop of Ely*, pp. 162–3.

⁴ Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust*, pp. 71–90.

⁵ *Foedera*, i, 1, p. 137.

⁶ *Rot. Litt. Pat.*, pp. 92 b, 99.

⁷ Taken from Holt, *Northerners*, p. 218.

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the more astounding. Evidently, the means by which John ensured the loyalty of his household knights: service in the expectation of future reward (the form of kingship that in another context Holt called government by *quid pro quo*),⁸ had failed catastrophically. The forces that prompted these men into rebellion must have been very powerful indeed.

⁸ Ibid., p. 254.

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E159	memoranda rolls, king's remembrancer
E164/20	Godstow cartulary
E368	memoranda rolls, lord treasurer's remembrancer
E372	pipe rolls
SC 1	ancient correspondence

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